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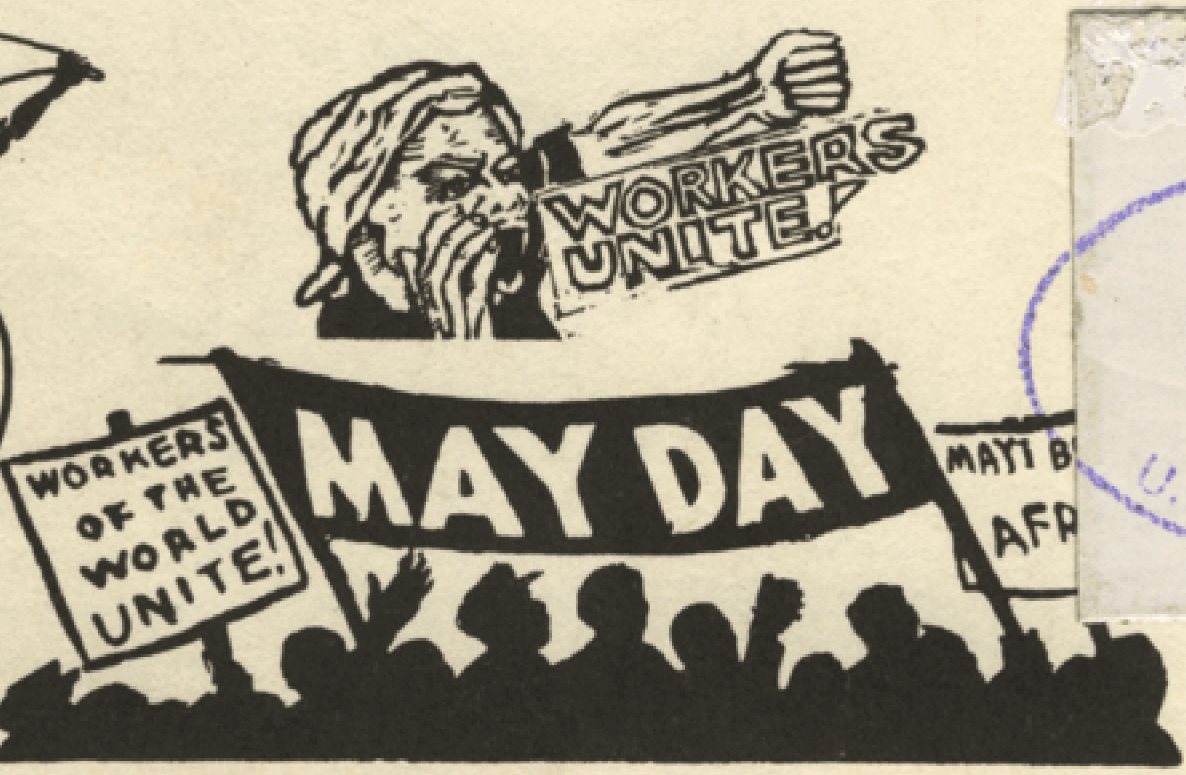
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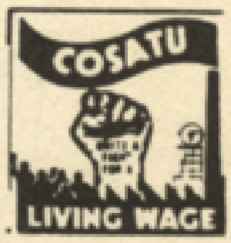
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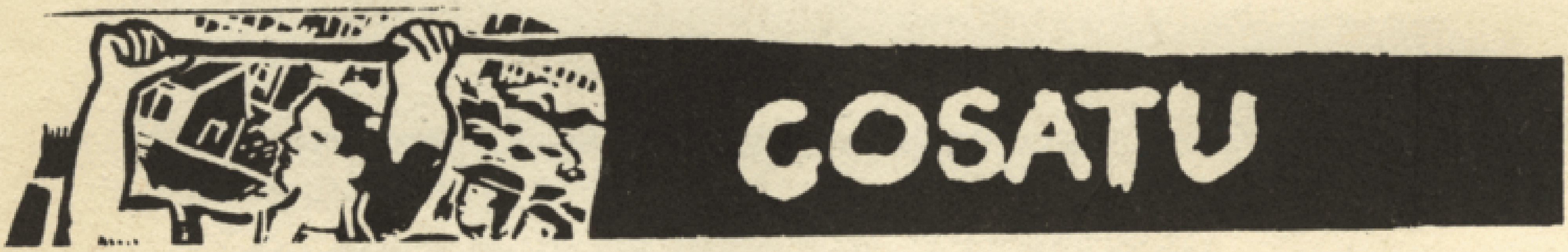

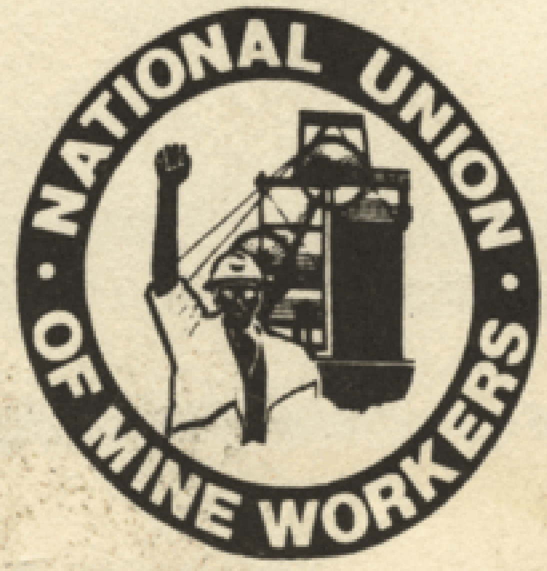
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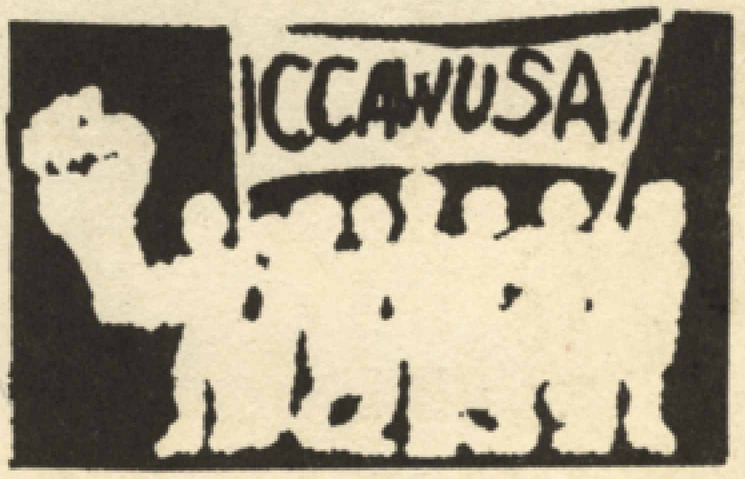

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THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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EDITORIAL NOTES

SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE ELECTION

The whites-only parliamentary election which took place in South Africa on May 6 reflected a perceptible shift to the right among the electorate. President Botha's National Party was returned with a huge majority, but lost seats and votes compared with the previous election. The Progressive Federal Party and its election ally the New Republic Party (the remnant of the old United Party) lost proportionately even more heavily, while gains were recorded by the right-wing Conservative Party which became the official opposition. The figures were (with 1981 election figures in brackets):

	Seats	*Percentage of Poll*
National Party	123 (131)	52.4 (57)
PFP	19 (26)	14.1 (19.4)
CP	22 (—)	26.4 (—)
HNP	0 (0)	3.1 (14.1)
NRP	1 (5)	1.9 (7.8)
Independents	1 (0)	2.1 (1.7)

The Conservative Party did not exist in 1981 but was formed after the breakaway of 17 members of the National Party in 1982. At the time of dissolution the CP had 17 seats and the HNP one (the result of a by-election).

Under the constitution, a further 12 seats in the white parliament are filled by a process of nomination and internal election. Of these the NP stands to get 10, the PFP 1 and CP 1. In effect, therefore the NP, despite its loss of votes, ends up with 133 seats — 13 more than it had at the time of dissolution. On the other hand the CP, which polled half as many votes as the NP, gets only one sixth of the total of seats scooped by the NP. This serves to emphasise the undemocratic nature of the constitution even for whites, with the scales weighted in favour of the party in power.

President Botha is now claiming that the election has given him a mandate, but the figures show that even for the whites he has less of a mandate than he had before. As for the black majority, he had not got, and never has had, any sort of a mandate. No blacks have ever voted for him or his party. A newspaper poll conducted at the time of the election revealed that if all South Africans had been free to vote, it would have been the ANC, not the NP, that was returned to power. The ANC in fact dominated the election. Every candidate had to declare what he was going to do about the ANC. A National Party press advertisement declared: "Over my dead boy would I vote for the ANC", followed by the question: "So why vote PFP?" and a string of quotations to show that the PFP was soft on "terrorism". And the PFP lost ground in the election because it ran away from the issue and could not formulate a clear line.

What Mandate?

When President Botha says he has been given a mandate, the question must be asked — a mandate for what?

Nobody today can say with certainty what the National Party stands for, or in which direction it is moving. The National Party election programme said very little about reform but a great deal about repression, with President Botha appealing for support on the grounds that he was the only one who could be relied upon to repel the "total onslaught" launched by the ANC/SACP "terrorists". The Nationalists were very eloquent about what they did not want. The did not want one person one vote elections in a united democratic South Africa; they did not want mixed schools or residential areas.

The only positive proposal recently advanced by President Botha has been for the constitution of a National Council for Africans outside the ""independent" Bantustans — and he puts his concept forward as though it is the answer to the Africans' demand for the franchise. To date there are no details as to how this Council is to be set up, whether it will be divided on ethnic lines etc. But whenever it comes into being, it is clear it will have no effective influence on decision-making, and Botha has made it plain he has no intention of setting up a fourth parliamentary chamber for Africans because this would overturn the built-in majority the whites enjoy in the existing parliamentary machinery.

If Botha does go ahead with his African Council, it will be solely to set African against African by bribing a handful of collaborators to co-operate with him in preserving white supremacy. There is no way in which the African National Congress could be persuaded to take part in such an undemocratic charade.

In the days of Hendrik Verwoerd the National Party was united round the concept of apartheid. Today the National Party condemns even the use of the word apartheid and the concept is enshrined only in the policies of the Conservative Party, the HNP, the Afrikanerweerstandsbeweging and similar bodies which insist that they, and not the NP, are the true voice of Afrikanerdom. But the election was not about the fate of Afrikanerdom, which was long ago settled in favour of the Afrikaners, who run parliament, the executive, the civil service, the police and the military, leaving only the topmost peaks of the economy still in the hands of "aliens". The election was about how to maintain white supremacy and what to do with the "revolutionaries" and "terrorists" who want to transform South Africa on the lines laid down in the Freedom Charter.

No contending party placed any positive suggestions before the electorate. The right-wing parties gained 30 per cent of the total votes cast with a call for blood and thunder — no concessions to "kaffirs", kill the "terrorists", invade the frontline states. But where the Conservatives could only talk and threaten, the National Party was able to act, using its state power to promote its macho image. It launched a ferocious attack on the mass democratic movement in the weeks running up to the election, killing strikers and demonstrators, raiding COSATU headquarters, detaining trade unionists, bludgeoning, sjambokking and shooting students, white as well as black, on a number of campuses, invading a frontline state and killing its citizens in cold blood on the spurious grounds that they were ANC "terrorists" planning to disrupt the elections.

Undemocratic Farce

Nor should it be forgotten that the election was conducted under a state of emergency, with the police and military exercising absolute powers under the protection of an indemnity. Soldiers with guns were stationed at every polling booth as though to emphasise that the regime was at war with the majority of the people. This was no free election but an undemocratic farce.

Not one party in the election was prepared to support a policy of one person one vote: not one was prepared to identify itself with the wishes of the disfranchised majority.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake for the liberation movement to write off the white community as whole because of the reactionary character of the white parliament. Even within the ranks of the white parliamentary parties there are signs that not all the politicians are unresponsive to demands for change. The breakaway of some "new Nationalists" from the NP is not without significance, and the re-election of one of them, Wynand Malan, and the near-miss of another, ex-Ambassador Dennis Worrall, indicates that not all members of the NP stand four-square behind the Botha rigidities. If the election has highlighted anything it is the deep divisions, uncertainties, confusion and pessimism with which the white population is racked.

Of a different order of importance is the recent upsurge of activity by openly anti-apartheid whites who have formed new organisations and undertaken various forms of activity directed against detention without trial, censorship and other excesses of the regime. One of the crucial tasks confronting the liberation movement is to seek ways and means of extending its influence in the white community, winning friends and allies, isolating the regime. Let our hatred of white domination not blind us to the fact that more and more whites are today ready to support the Freedom Charter, refusing to serve in the security forces, prepared to go to jail for their beliefs. White students and demonstrators are today also lashed by police sjamboks, blinded by teargas, tortured in detention. While some whites are running away, more and more of them ar singing freedom songs and shouting freedom slogans, demonstrating their willingness to join hands with blacks in the liberation struggle. It is the duty of our movement to devote every effort to recruiting more whites into our ranks.

No Time For Compromise

Events during and since the election have made it plain that there is no possibility of negotiations or compromise with the Botha regime, which has nothing on offer to negotiate about. Botha has pigeon-holed whatever plans he might have had for "reform", and is now concentrating all his energies on repression. All anti-apartheid organisations are facing a frontal onslaught. Leaders of the mass democratic movement are detained without trial, and the scale of the offensive indicates that the regime aims to stamp out all forms of extra-parliamentary opposition. Special targets are COSATU and the trade union movement, whose offices have been bombed and which everywhere find themselves confronted by the co-ordinated terrorism of the regime, the bosses and back-street gangs of vigilantes. Striking workers are sacked in their tens of thousands. Families participating in the township rent boycotts are heartlessly evicted from their homes by the police.

Botha says he is always willing to talk, but it is plain he will listen only to offers of surrender. It must be made clear to him that the people are not prepared to surrender. Every legal means of struggle must be utilised to the full to voice the demands of the majority of the population for democracy and social progress. We demand the right to vote. We demand the right to education and training. We demand the right to a job and decent housing. We demand the ending of all forms of discrimination and exploitation.

And Botha should be warned. As he closes one by one the means available to the people for legal and peaceful opposition to his policies, so will he convince more and more people that they must have recourse to armed struggle to achieve their objectives. If the outcome of the election is that repression is intensified, the answer of the masses and their organisations must be to build Umkhonto we Sizwe, the people's army, until it is powerful enough to achieve their objectives.

The liberation movement in the recent period has demonstrated abundantly its enormous capacity to mobilise the people effectively in the struggle for change. Despite the emergency, despite the repression, despite the censorship, despite the arrests, beatings and shootings, the mass democratic organisations have shown themselves able to bring millions of people out on strike, not only for higher wages and better conditions, but also in protest against apartheid tyranny. On May 5 and 6, rejecting the election farce, millions of people stayed at home in the biggest demonstration against white domination ever seen in this country. Under the noses of the security police the people have organised new unions, a new youth organisation, a new women's organisation. The creative ingenuity and initiative of the masses is everywhere in evidence.

This is not a time for despondency over Botha's ridiculous election result but a time for action.

ORGANISE!
MOBILISE!
FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER!
FORWARD TO FINAL VICTORY!

STOP THESE JUDICIAL MURDERS

Murder, both judicial and by means of death squads or bestial torture in detention, is becoming the order of the day in South Africa. The regime makes a show of democracy via its whites-only elections, but as far as the blacks are concerned resorts to brutal force and aggression to compel compliance with its dictates. In terms of the state of emergency brought into force on June 12, 1986, hardly any form of activity is now legal, even for whites. Meetings and demonstrations are banned, the press is censored, the "legal" trade union movement is illegalised by executive harassment, assaults and killings, both by military/police action and the rampages of regime-backed vigilantes. The number "legally" killed during the emergency runs into thousands, the number detained totals several tens of thousands. The outrages of the security forces are justified in the name of "law and order", and the perpetrators of atrocities are protected by immunities from any redress on the part of the victims or their dependants.

As at January 31, there were 309 political prisoners serving sentences for "crimes against the state" in South African prisons, according to figures supplied by the Minister of Justice. This figure does not include those serving sentences in the so-called "independent" Bantustans, nor those serving sentences for "public violence" and other politically related offences other than treason and offences under the Internal Security Act. One wonders what is left. But then there is good reason to regard all the daily average of well over 100,000 persons in prison as being the victims of the apartheid laws. A twisted and distorted society in which the interests of the black majority are subordinated by force to those of the white minority is hardly calculated to induce respect for "law and order".

Out of all the millions of South Africans who are today rebelling against the unendurable injustice of apartheid, we wish to focus attention on only the 22 who at the time of writing are awaiting execution on death row in Pretoria. Possibly by the time these lines appear in print, the number will have increased, because more and more trials under the security laws are taking place every week and death sentences are being handed out right and left. Some of those sentenced to death are freedom fighters who were carrying out their duties as members of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the people's army of liberation. Others were ordinary men and women caught up in street battles between the police and the people, often indiscriminately scooped up by raiding parties and accused of crimes they did not commit. A few have been convicted for participating in the "necklacing" of the hated police, informers or collaborators, or other offences committed on the spur of the moment under intense provocation. In many cases the only evidence against the accused has been their own confessions extracted under torture while held in solitary confinement under the no-trial detention laws.

It cannot be stressed too often that the responsibility for the violence that is scarring our land rests with the regime. The laws — all of them, both statutes and common law — are an instrument of the white minority for maintaining white minority rule. Blacks have had no hand in framing those laws, but are expected to obey them. When they object, force is used against them. Their organisations are outlawed, their leaders banned and jailed. In the recent period trade unionists, UDF activists and militants of all kinds have been murdered by the vigilantes on the instructions of the regime. It is the regime which is responsible for the thousands of murders that have been committed on the streets of the townships. It is the regime's torturers who have murdered almost 100 people held in detention under the no-trial laws since they were introduced in 1963. It is the regime's death squads who murder innocent men, women and children in their homes at dead of night. It is the regime's agents and mercenaries who invade neighbouring territories and kill and kidnap those whom they describe as "ANC terrorists" but who are often innocent citizens of the frontline states.

And what of the torture and suffering that does not result in death? Thousands of South Africa's sons and daughters have been maimed physically and mentally as a result of police brutality. A recent study of life in police detention compiled by the National Medical and Dental Association provides horrific details of the way in which detainees have been electrically shocked, beaten, stripped naked and tortured by the police. Many victims have suffered severe mental damage following months of solitary confinement, and some have been driven to suicide to escape further torment.

Law of the Jungle

The "law and order" of Botha and his gangsters is the law of the jungle, imposed by force and maintained by force. The authority of the government has never derived from the consent of the governed. Yet at the instance of a regime which is illegal in the eyes of the majority of the population, these 22 are now sitting in the death cell awaiting execution. It is the intention of the regime that they should be put to death because they dared in one way or another to challenge the continuation of white minority rule and abuse of power. If they themselves resorted to "illegal" acts or violence, it was a response to the endless brutality and violence directed against them by the regime's men with guns, whips and dogs.

All possible steps must be taken to prevent these death sentences from being carried out. The execution of more and more people under the insane apartheid laws can never bring peace and prosperity to South Africa. All Botha's reforms and repression to date have failed to solve the problems of the country because nothing has been done to meet the aspirations of the people, remedy their grievances, give them confidence in the future.

We urge our readers in South Africa and abroad to take steps to help save the lives of the 22 on death row and any others who may join them. Demand that all captured members of Umkhonto we Sizwe be treated, not as criminals, but as prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions of 1949, just as the ANC itself has pledged to do in respect of all members of the regular armed forces of the South African regime captured by MK.

Write letters to the Minister of Justice in Pretoria, or to the local South African Ambassador, demanding a reprieve for those on death row.

We call on governments everywhere to intervene on behalf of those sentenced to death and make representations to the South African regime.

We call on anti-apartheid organisations in South Africa and solidarity organisations abroad to organise mass action against the proposed executions through their organisations or as individuals.

The apartheid murder machine must be halted!

THE REVOLUTION AFTER 70 YEARS

The words *glasnost* and *perestroika,* Russian for *openness* and *restructuring,* have now become incorporated in all the world's languages as the Soviet Union advances on its planned course of social transformation. Men and women everywhere, not least in the Soviet Union itself, are fascinated by the spectacle of a country re-examining itself from its foundations upwards and taking effective action to remedy defects and bring about reforms. Even Mrs Thatcher on her visit to the Soviet Union earlier this year confessed that she was impressed. Her perceptions of Soviet society, based largely on prejudice and the ravings of Solzhenitsyn and his ilk, were modified by her contact with reality. The sheer size and scope of the Soviet experiment in social engineering and the energy with which it is being conducted are astounding friend and foe alike.

Nobody who has studied Soviet society over the years should be surprised by what is taking place, yet even in sympathetic circles there are many misconceptions. What is going on?, ask some with dismay. Has socialism failed? Is Gorbachov a revisionist? Where will it all end?

The first point to stress is that Mikhail Gorbachov is not a dictator, and that however estimable his personal qualities may be, what is happening in the Soviet Union is not the consequence of his personal decision but the resolve of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, an organisation of 19 million members determined to build a socialist society on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Despite past errors, despite such manifestations as the cult of the individual, the CPSU has throughout this century demonstrated its adherence to the principles of democratic centralism, to collective decision-making and working which has given it the ability to mobilise the masses for revolution, for war, for economic transformation and now for social reconstruction and advance in line with the principles which inspired the initial breakthrough in 1917.

There have been deviations and distortions along the way, to be sure, but the party has again and again demonstrated its ability to correct mistakes, to resolve contradictions, and to keep open the road to a communist future which it has blazed with such determination and at the cost of so much sacrifice. The very depth of the Party's experience is a guarantee that what is being undertaken now is no sudden aberration but the outcome of prolonged debate, a response to steadily accumulating public concern.

Perestroika did not begin with Gorbachov. It has been inherent in Soviet society from its inception. In "*Left-wing" Communism — An Infantile Disorder,* Lenin wrote in 1920:

> "A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfils *in practice* its obligations towards its *class* and the *working people.* Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, and thrashing out the means of rectification — that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its *class* and then the *masses.*" (Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 31, p.57)

The CPSU has constantly striven to be such a party. It has made mistakes, and at times even crimes have been committed in its name, but it has always corrected itself. An example was the report presented to the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 by general secretary Khruschov condemning the deformations of the preceding period. The report called for the elimination of the cult of the individual which had grown up in the later years of Stalin's secretaryship and the re-establishment of truly collective leadership.

This was done, but later other contradictions emerged in the conduct of Soviet affairs. The last years of the Brezhnev era were characterised by a tendency to bureaucracy, stagnation and inertia. The flag of reform in this instance was raised by the Party leadership when Yuri Andropov was general secretary. In an article written in 1983 in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx's death, comrade Andropov wrote that it was a

> "simplistic and politically naive idea that socialism gets rid of contradiction and difference and of all troubles in everyday life . . . Yes, we have both contradictions and difficulties. To think that there can be some other course of development would mean turning aside from the reliable, though sometimes rough, ground of reality". And he quoted Lenin:
>
> > "Antagonism and contradiction are not all one and the same thing. The former will disappear, the latter will remain under socialism".

Likewise the nature of contradictions changes. A system which was suitable for one period of Soviet development may not be suitable in another. A highly centralised system of management and planning was obviously called for in the early days of socialism after the revolution when competent resources and trained personnel were scarce and the threat of counter-revolution and imperialist intervention bulked large. Centralised control made possible the huge industrial advance and collectivisation of agriculture in the 1920s and 1930s which laid the foundation for socialism, and likewise facilitated the mobilisation and deployment of people and material essential for victory in World War 2. But today excessive centralisation is found to be hampering economic, social and technological advance, stifling individual initiative. Recent decisions of the Soviet authorities have provided for a degree of decentralisation and even the promotion of certain forms of private enterprise which are not inconsistent with socialism.

70 Years of Achievements

But it cannot be emphasised too often — the great achievement of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is that, despite all errors and shortcomings, it has been unwavering in its commitment to maintain the socialist system and ethic, and that under the banner of Marxism-Leninism it has steadily advanced the cause of the proletariat nationally and internationally. It has built the Soviet Union into a mighty world power, advanced the living standards of all sections of the Soviet people, blazed the trail of freedom, independence and social progress for all formerly dependent peoples, laid the foundations for secure world peace.

The flag which is fluttering bravely at the masthead in the Gorbachov era is the flag of reform, not of reformism. And it is not a case of Gorbachov, the great, who is dispensing miracles. It is Gorbachov as first secretary of the CPSU, elected by a Central Committee of 307 members to reflect the view of the majority, who is presiding over the process of *perestroika* which has been gathering strength over a long period of time and is now sweeping all obstacles aside because it coincides with the interests and wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Soviet people. Nothing that has been done to date should be regarded as in any way constituting a threat to socialism.

The main means of production and distribution remain under social ownership and control, and the CPSU has every intention of keeping it that way.

Criticism ad Self-criticism

Complaints have been voiced in the bourgeois press that the impetus for *perestroika* is coming from the top and not from the grass roots of Soviet society. What nonsense! In the first place, the aim of *perestroika* was outlined in detail in the programme of the CPSU which was debated up and down the country for months before it was adopted at the 27th congress of the party in February 1986. In the second place, the whole objective of *perestroika* is precisely to involve the masses in the process of social change, at every possible level. What was registered at the 27th congress was the recognition that social relations in the Soviet Union were no longer compatible with the potential development of the productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; and they are now being burst asunder. Not by class struggle and revolution, because classes have been eliminated and class conflict no longer exists; but by democratic party decision, by application of criticism and self-criticism on the part of a party which understands the dialectical process in history.

The practice of criticism and self-criticism is not mechanical and simplistic but involves the identification and analysis of positive and negative trends and the ability to respond to diverse social pressures. Over the years, said comrade Gorbachov presenting the report of the Political Bureau to the Central Committee on January 27, 1987, the people, including the leadership, had become increasingly dissatisfied with the way things were going in the Soviet Union.

> "At some point the country began to lose momentum, difficulties and unresolved problems started to pile up, and there appeared elements of stagnation and other phenomena alien to socialism. All that badly affected the economy and social, cultural and intellectual life".

Listing one by one the ways in which the economy was floundering and Soviet society was failing to live up to the ideals of its founders, comrade Gorbachov stated firmly:

> "The main cause was that the CPSU Central Committee and the leadership of the country failed, primarily for subjective reasons, to see in time and in full the need for change and the danger of the intensification of crisis phenomena in society or to formulate a clear policy for overcoming them and failed to make better use of the opportunities intrinsic to the socialist system.
>
> "Conservative sentiments, inertia, a tendency to brush aside everything that did not fit into conventional patterns and an unwillingness to come to grips with outstanding socio-economic questions prevailed in policy-making and practical work.
>
> "Comrades, it is the leading bodies of the party and the state that bear responsibility for all this".

It is the Central Committee of the CPSU which is master-minding the whole process of social reconstruction which is now taking place under the rubric of *perestroika.* It is a huge undertaking. Not only have outdated methods of work to be altered, but new ways of thinking have to be inculcated, corruption and nepotism rooted out and a new morality established. The way of life of the people and their thinking about their way of life have to be altered at one and the same time, and this is neither quick nor easy. Consciousness will not be changed simply by admonitions and warnings but by widescale perception of a change in objective circumstances; yet these in turn will not change without purposeful striving on the part of the people themselves.

Care is being taken that in this revolutionary process the socialist system itself is not endangered or the immense gains which have been achieved since 1917 disregarded. Some writers both inside the Soviet Union and abroad have tended to interpret *perestroika* as a condemnation of the whole pre-Gorbachov era, and their criticism and self-criticism have been so extreme that their readers might be induced to throw out the socialist baby with the bureaucratic bathwater. In his January 27 speech comrade Gorbachov was careful to avoid this error:

> "Our achievements are immense and indubitable and the Soviet people by right take pride in their successes. They constitute a firm base for the fulfilment of our current programmes and our plans for the future".

In fact, it is precisely the strength of the socialist Soviet system that gives the leadership the confidence, the means and the right to carry out their task of restructuring. The positive in Soviet achievement over 70 years since the revolution far outweighs the negative. Indeed it is often pride in the positive which induces some of the opponents of *glasnost* and *perestroika* to take a conservative position; not all are self-serving bureaucrats and opportunists, though the latter obviously abound.

The very fact that the Central Committee of the CPSU is heading the campaign for *glasnost* and *perestroika* is testimony to the basic health of the Soviet system. Comrade Gorbachov stressed in his January 27 report that it was the party itself which found the "strength and courage" to face up to the errors of the past, "to take a sober view of the situation, to admit the need for drastic changes in policy, in the economy and social, cultural and intellectual fields and to steer the country on the road of change". And we might well ask: what bourgeois government has ever in the past undertaken such a process of restructuring, what bourgeois government would be capable of spearheading such a revolutionary process? It is an enormous task which the Soviet people have undertaken, and the road ahead will be full of problems and difficulties. There will be the objective difficulties of raising the economic level, promoting the scientific and technological advances which are needed for progress; and there are the subjective problems associated with overcoming resistance to change from within the ranks of the Soviet people, even from some quarters in the Communist Party itself.

Of the utmost significance is the fact that the CPSU does not exempt itself from the task of restructuring and renewal. Democratic reforms are being introduced inside the party, provision is being made for a wider element of choice in elections and the leadership at all levels is being made more acountable to the membership as a whole. *Glasnost* is entering into the proceedings of the party which are now being more and more exposed to public scrutiny.

Socialism and Democracy

We know from past experience that the CPSU, once it has decided upon a course of action, has the capacity to perform miracles because it can mobilise the masses for action in accordance with the laws of scientific planning. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* are not being imposed on an unwilling populace; they are ways of releasing the creative initiative of the people in furtherance of an agreed objective. Comrade Gorbachov in his speech stressed the vital link between socialism and democracy:

> "It is only through the consistent development of the democratic forms inherent in socialism, through a broadening of self-government that our advance in production, science and technology, literature, culture and the arts, in all areas of social life is possible. It is only this way that ensures conscientious discipline.
>
> "The re-organisation itself is possible only through democracy and due to democracy. It is only this way that it is possible to give scope to socialism's most powerful creative force — free labour and free thought in a free country".

Thanks to *glasnost* and *perestroika,* the tide in Soviet affairs has already turned for the better. In the first year of the current five-year plan, material national income rose by 4.1 per cent as against 3.9 per cent in the plan and the annual average of 3.6 per cent in the previous five years. Grain production in 1986 was up by 30 million tons, a 17 per cent increase over the average for the previous five years, and other agricultural production increased by between 7 and 11 per cent, depending on the item. Comrade Gorbachov commented:

> "As you see comrades, agricultural output has begun to grow, something we have not seen in most decisive indices for many years".

Industrial production grew by 4.9 per cent, one third more than the average for the previous five years, thanks largely to an increase in labour productivity which accounted for 96% of the gain. On the collective and state farms, productivity increased by 6.9%, the profit rate amounted to 19% and profits increased by two billion roubles. In the social sphere the number of accidents and loss of working time declined for the first time since the 1960s thanks to the steps taken to strengthen discipline and combat alcohol abuse. The total number of crimes dropped by a quarter and the number of grave crimes by a third. The housing situation improved and in 1986 more schools, kindergartens, cultural institutions and hospitals were built than in 1985.

However, pointed out comrade Gorbachov, progress is still uneven, and pockets of stagnation and resistance are still encountered. But he expressed total confidence in the future:

> "You will recall, comrades, how passionately, how tirelessly Lenin taught that the success of revolutionary struggle, the success of any fundamental restructuring of society is determined in many ways by the mood set by the party.
>
> "We wish to turn our country into a model of a highly developed state, into a society with the most advanced economy, the broadest democracy, the most humane and lofty ethics, where the working man would feel that he is master, would enjoy all benefits of material and spiritual culture, where the future of his children would be secure, where he would have everything that is necessary for a full and interesting life.
>
> "And even sceptics would be forced to say: yes, the Bolsheviks can accomplish anything. Yes, the truth is on their side. Yes, socialism is a system serving man, working for his benefit, in his social and economic interests, for his spiritual elevation."

The mood set by the party is now sweeping the country and making its impact on the world political scene. It is quite different from Czechoslovakia in 1968. Then the voices of counter-revolution were more and more making themselves heard in the Czechoslovak media. In the Soviet Union today the party is in full control and it is the sound of socialism which is triumphing because society is ready for the changes proposed by the Central Committee. There will still be hiccups. The Soviet Union is a huge country with many different peoples, languages and cultures. Structures have to be created through which *glasnost* and *perestroika* can be given secure expression. It will not be done overnight.

But the process has started and a glance at the Soviet media today shows that we can have every confidence in the outcome. It is to be hoped that nobody in the outside world will make the mistake of thinking that what is happening in the Soviet Union is of interest only to the Soviet people and of no concern to others. South African revolutionaries must ask themselves what lessons they can learn from the Soviet experience. If the liberation movement is to succeed in mobilising the masses on the scale necessary to achieve victory, our leaders too must win the confidence and trust of the people, take care to articulate their concerns and aspirations, make themselves accountable to the rank and file, scrupulously adhere to the principles of democratic centralism. Anarchic individualism and opportunism must be combated and emphasis placed on the need for collectivity to be practised at all levels in the making and implementing of decisions. The needs of security must be observed without degenerating into obsessive secrecy. Criticism and self-criticism must be conducted not behind closed doors but through democratic structures so that arbitrary and excessive actions can be avoided. Dead wood and all harmful excrescences must be rigorously cut out and replaced by vigorous new growth if the impetus of our advance is to be maintained.

We have no doubt that both the SACP and the ANC will better be able to perform their leading role if they too include *glasnost* and *perestroika* in their vocabulary.

(See Gorbachov on the national question — page 105).

AN EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE

On February 12, 1987, the chairman of the South African Communist Party, Dan Tloome, wrote to the President of the African National Congress requesting the release of Joe Slovo from his functions as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Comrade Tloome's letter read:

"Dear comrade Tambo,

"As you have already been informed, comrade Joe Slovo has been elected General Secretary of our Party. The tasks and duties which now rest on his shoulders have multiplied immensely. As the leading public officer of our Party and its chief spokesman, he is called upon increasingly to devote himself to elaborating and projecting its policies and perspectives and to participate in numerous exchanges with both internal and international groups. In addition he must play an important part in ensuring that our leading collective vigorously pursues its task of ensuring that our Party carries out its duties as part of our great liberation alliance and as a force representing the historic aspirations of our working class.

"In the light of the above we make a fraternal request for the release of Comrade Slovo from his functions as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe. His association with our People's Army began on the very day of its foundation and our Party is proud of the contribution he has made to the growth of MK and to its massive impact in the political struggle.

"It is however obvious that his new responsibilities will make it increasingly difficult for him to give the kind of full-time attention to the vital tasks which his army post demands. Conversely, by dividing his energies between the two tasks, he will be prevented from doing justice to his position as General Secretary.

"We reiterate that our Party remains firmly committed to the strengthening of the revolutionary alliance headed by the ANC and to its strategy of People's War.

"Long Live MK!

"Long Live the Alliance!

"Long Live the ANC!

On March 2 President Tambo replied as follows:

"Dear Comrade Dan,

"Thank you very much for your letter in which you inform us that Comrade Joe Slovo has been elected General Secretary of the South African Communist Party.

"I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both you and Comrade Joe on your election to the respective positions of Chairman and General Secretary of the SACP. I look forward to our continued cooperartion in pursuit of the common objective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

"Our National Executive Committee has considered and agreed to your request that we release Comrade Joe Slovo from his responsibilities as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe. We appreciate your concern that Comrade Joe should concentrate on his tasks as the General Secretary of the SACP.

"As you know, Comrade Joe has been associated with Umkhonto we Sizwe from its very foundation. For a good part of the last 25 years, he has played an important role as a member of its command structures. The NEC is happy with the invaluable work he has done as part of this collective to strengthen the people's army, to activise it and to entrench its traditions of loyalty to the ANC and the perspectives contained in the Freedom Charter. History has assured him his place as one of the senior military leaders of our centuries-old struggle to assert our right to self-determination.

"For these reasons, it was not easy for the NEC to accede to your request because we knew that his departure from our military headquarters would deprive us of his experience and talent. However we had to bow to the inevitable. We are pleased that as a member of the NEC and the PMC, Comrade Joe will continue to make a direct input into the process of the escalation of the armed struggle for the victory of the democratic revolution.

"Amandla? Matla!"

COSATU On The Move

WORKERS FIGHT AGAINST REIGN OF TERROR

By R.E. Nyameko

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was launched on November 30, 1985, during the State of Emergency (SOE) of July 1985-March 1986. When COSATU was six months old the regime declared another SOE on 12th June 1986. When trade union officials and activists came to their offices, security police were occupying entrances to the buildings. When officials were allowed to enter their offices they found that they had been searched. Thousands of democrats, among them trade unionists, were detained during the emergency.

It was the membership of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union — CCAWUSA, an affiliate of COSATU — that immediately gave leadership, holding sleep-ins and sit-ins in the stores in support of the demand to release trade union leaders from detention. Another affiliate of COSATU — the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) — took legal action against the regime and won the right for trade unions to have meetings.

Regulations promulgated in December 1986 and January and April 1987 make the current state of emergency more repressive than previous emergencies. Despite the whites-only election on May 6 there is no indication when the emergency will be lifted, with all its long-term detentions, media censorship, and the blanket ban on all sources of information concerning the activities of the occupation of the townships by the army, police and security forces. As the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC) stated in its annual report, South Africa is one big concentration camp. 25,000 of the 28,471 people detained last year were held in terms of emergency legislation and a further 2,840 were detained under the country's security legislation. Of these 10,000 are children and over 2,200 babies.[1] After 225 days of the current SOE almost 3,000 people had died in political violence.[2]

The Labour Monitoring Group (LMG) said at least 614 unionists had been held since the start of the emergency. And at least 2,000 workers were held in mass detentions during various disputes.[3] Kobie Coetzee, Minister of Prisons, told Parliament that the prisons are overcrowded by more than 200%.

The terror unleashed by the regime has resulted in murder, killings of young and old, men and women. South Africa is in a very deep crisis that embraces every dimension in the life of the country. There will be chronic emergencies, more and more severe ones. As President O.R. Tambo said:

> "The state of emergency came because the enemy could not govern except by calling in the army, suspending the laws and using force — naked force, brutal force. Our people are used to struggling under what has amounted to a state of emergency. All along the change has been one of degrees."[4]

The apartheid regime cannot rescue our country from this crisis because it is the cause of the crisis. It is a crisis between the white racist minority regime and the demands of our people for majority rule based on one person one vote.

In spite of those hazards, the trade union movement still retains its basic structures, continues to mobilise large numbers of workers to resist the regime and its black puppet vigilante gangs — the "A" team, Witdoeke onslaught.

The Role of COSATU in this Conflict

COSATU's central executive meeting at the end of February 1987 issued a message to all members[5]. It examined its shortcomings in the past year and pledged powerful workers' action in the year ahead. COSATU, an estimated

650,000 strong federation, with the support of scholars, students and community organisations put MAY DAY on its 100th anniversary last year back into our history of working-class solidarity and resistance to the racist regime. It was the largest stay-away ever recorded with an estimated 1,500,000 workers taking part and calling for the day to be declared a public holiday. On June 16, the 10th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising, tens of thousands of workers stayed at home to commemorate the day in spite of the SOE declared four days before and which was accompanied by widespread detentions and a massive police, army and security force presence in the townships.

Nonetheless COSATU is highly critical of the lack of support for stayaways against the SOE and in protest at the killing of SARMCOL workers and their relatives at KwaMakutha in December 1986, the failure to implement COSATU's "guiding light" policy of "An Injury To One Is An Injury To All". The document states that when "the employers and the state saw how we failed to build July 14 and December 1 (the dates of later stayaways) they grew more confident and focused on these failures as a sign of weakness."

COSATU particularly criticises the failure to implement the merger of the 33 founding affiliates into 14 super-unions.

COSATU has made great strides in its 18 months of existence. It has proved that the Andrew Levy labour analysts' evaluation that "they are a disunited and vulnerable federation" is wishful thinking on the part of employers and the state.

The estimated economically active population in 1983 was 9,198,592, of whom about 6 million workers could be organised. It was estimated that 1,545,284 belonged to 240 unions i.e. 25% were organised. At that time African membership of all trade unions stood at 671,194 or 43% of the organised labour force.

Currently it is estimated that the urban African population is 10 million and the total workforce 12 million.[6] Membership in trade unions at the end of 1985 reached 2 million and trade union organisations increased to almost 300 in 1986.[7]

COSATU has not only made a big contribution to the growth of trade unionism but, perhaps even more importantly, has contributed significantly to a qualitative change in the type of trade union organisation. COSATU's policy of building national unions on shop-steward structures, with a democratic tradition based on constant consultations with their membership has seen tested shop stewards stand up to the brutal treatment from the state and employers. Today the unions have between them tens of thousands of shop stewards in factories, plants and shaft stewards on the mines.

COSATU is today the target of the most serious attack on trade unions since the 1960s. The emergence of COSATU was seen by the state as a serious threat. Thanks to the existence of the democratic shop-steward system it could regroup and consolidate. 1986 was the most difficult year since the beginning of the decade. Wages and salaries in the manufacturing sector fell in real terms, wages in the mines are still below those of the manufacturing sector. Despite a recession that put many workers out of a job, and with 250,000 to 300,000 school leavers entering the job market, the unions succeeded in maintaining a high degree of militancy.

Strike Statistics

In 1985 there were 389 strikes involving 239,816 workers.[8] There were 643 strikes and 150 work stoppages in 1986, though 174 recognition agreements and 1,090 other agreements were signed. 1,294 applications for conciliation boards had been received by the manpower department of which 306 were approved. And the number of cases in the industrial courts had increased from 801 in 1985 to about 2,000 in 1986.[9]

	Workers involved in strikes	*Workers involved in workstoppages*	*Total Manhours lost due to strikes & stops*
Africans	310,676	98,099	9,947,824
Asians	1,340	26	65,512
Coloured	11,538	2,046	442,496
White	254	1	15,832
TOTAL[10]	323,808	100,172	10,471,664

Strikes were more militant and longer in duration. Police were called to the scene of strikes 266 times. The input in strikes by workers of COSATU affiliates was fully described in *The African Communist* No 108 (First Quarter 1987 p.48-54).

The Labour Monitoring Group noted mounting pressure against the labour movement. This included the new emergency regulations, increased detentions of unionists, vigilante attacks against MAWU in Natal, attempted deportation of top union officials of NUM and the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union etc. The redefinition of "subversive statements" in the emergency regulations included a ban on calling for illegal strikes and consumer boycotts. Although almost all strikes in South Africa are technically illegal, the possibility of strike action has become a regular part of industrial bargaining.

The draft bill amending the Labour Relations Act has serious implications for workers. New secrecy provisions make it a criminal offence to disclose the outcome of industrial court cases without the consent of the court's president. The creation of new unfair labour practice (ULP) definitions which are vague — one example is a clause making it unfair for one worker to be replaced by another under less favourable circumstances — is a sop to white workers by discouraging racial undercutting. And new clauses make it illegal to have sympathy strikes and unfair to launch secondary boycotts involving employers vs employees not directly party to the dispute. Legal strikes have still not been decriminalised and the bill does not clarify the circumstances under which legal strikes should enjoy protection.

All this shows the part the organised trade union movement is playing in the general mass struggle through the state of emergency. It is a fight which the regime has unsuccessfully tried to suppress through more and more brutal force.

Let us examine the position of some of the unions affiliated to COSATU, their role in union building, in the struggle to advance and further workers' interests, in union mergers and strikes.

COSATU Affiliates

The National Union of Mineworkerrs (NUM) is the biggest of COSATU's affiliates. Formed in July 1982 its sensational rate of growth from an initial membership of 6,000 to the present 360,000, its strategy and tactics as well as its methods are amazingly and carefully thought out and shaped to the needs and consciousness of the workers. The quality of its leadership and loyalty to its members have all combined to destroy a long-standing myth that African miners do not want a union, or, if they want one, are incapable of organising it. NUM's general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa attributed the union's success to its policy of democratic controls, grassroots participation and the union's aims of responding to members' aspirations and grievances. By 1985[12] the union's shaft-steward movement had grown to 3,800 in 85 mines and plants of which 1,500 were officially recognised. Workers had been organised to act against arbitrary dismissals, inflated prices in concession stores, removal of job reservation, wage demands and last, but not least, the prevention of accidents.

NUM reacted strongly to the explosion at Hlobane coal mine in Vryheid, Natal, in September 1983 in which 68 miners died and launched a campaign for the protection of safety and health on the mines. The union demanded workers' representation in the inquiry into the disaster, a miners' Bill of

Rights dealing with safety issues and representation on a commission on safety on the mines. NUM put in a claim for R6 million on behalf of the 42 families. From then onwards, NUM has called on its members to take action in cases of serious accidents, as when they stopped work at Rietspruit Colliery in January 1984 and February 1985 in protest against the death of colleagues on the mine.

In February 1986 the NUM national congress decided to take industrial action if there was no progress on the removal of job reservation on the mines. In September 1986 the Mines and Works Amendment Bill was submitted, providing for the formation of a selection board to pick and choose candidates for competency and blasting certificates. In a memorandum to a parliamentary committee on the Bill, NUM contended that the Bill's aim was to entrench race discrimination in other ways.

With the right wing dead against the removal of the last statutory job reservation, Arrie Paulus, the white Mine Workers' Union general secretary and a member of the Conservative Party, and Cor de Jager, president of the MWU, warned the Union's congress that blacks will be granted blasting certificates and called on union members to demonstrate their dissatisfaction at the polls on May 6.[13]

The mining industry is the origin and mainstay of the apartheid economy and job colour bars. Five years after the Wiehahn commission had recommended the introduction of a non-racial definition of "competent person", the regime and the mining companies have failed to overcome the refusal of the white Mine Workers' Union to budge. Its annual congress of January 1986 decided to prevent what it called "the elimination of the white mine worker".

The NUM and the mining houses want job reservation to go. It is urgent for the entire liberation movement to mobilise support for the NUM's battle to remove the 100 years of colour bars on the mines.

The NUM's fifth annual congress held at the end of February 1987 was a mirror of its growth, strength and political maturity. 150 delegates from 11 of 12 NUM regions attended this years' congress. The Union's Natal region failed to attend because of the attack against democratically organised workers launched by UWUSA (the United Workers' Union of SA) sponsored by Inkatha and Buthelezi.

The NUM congress, which in 1986 had elected Nelson Mandela as its honorary president, this year adopted the Freedom Charter as a guiding document in the struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation and declared that "apartheid and capitalism are two inseparable evils that must be smashed". Some delegates said "workers were not only striving for better working conditions in the mines, but for a democratic socialist society controlled by the working class" and called on the NUM not to "shy away" from political involvement, "to defend and advance the interests of its members and the working class in general".

It resolved for a 55 per cent wage increase, to refuse to work overtime as a means of improving their earnings; called on mineworkers to make a clear statement of their intent to dismantle the migrant labour system which is the "root of violence" on the mines; to establish workers' control of the hostels with democratically elected representatives as opposed to the tribally appointed *indunas*. On mine violence, every branch committee was urged to form defence units to protect workers from attacks by armed thugs, vigilantes and people hostile to the NUM. Mineworkers were urged to take security and safety into their own hands.

The union called for a say in safety and health in the mines;for the recognition of May 1 and June 16 as paid holidays; the lifting of the SOE; the release of all political detainees. The union called on employers to stop income tax and Unemployment Insurance Fund deductions — a system of taxation without representation; and called on the government Mining Engineer to institute enquiries into the Kinross and Middlebult mining disasters. The NUM has declared 1987 "the Year Mineworkers Take Control of their Lives on Every Level".[14]

NUM's congress resolutions will make an important impact on COSATU's congress in July. Communists and progressives must give unstinted support to the NUM and their resolutions. First and foremost the other existing African mine unions like the Black and Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (BAMCWU) (affiliated to CUSA), Black Allied Mines and Tunnel Workers' Union (BAMTWU) and others should be brought into the NUM.

Mergers

The first merger in response to COSATU's appeal for One Industry — One Union was in the food sector, with the creation of the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU). FAWU was made up of the Food and Canning Workers' Union (32,000 members), Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union (26,000 members), Retail and Allied Workers' Union (2,900) as well as food workers organised in the General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU) and others. FAWU now represents 65,000 workers organised in 350 factories in all major towns and rural areas. It is organised in 17 major sectors within the food and drink manufacturing sector. Workers organised in different towns but employed by the same company are represented by the same union, thus the union's hand is strengthened when bargaining with management. Not all organised food workers are in FAWU — the Food and Beverage Workers' Union (FBWU), a CUSA affiliate, did not participate in the merger conference. However, many workers in the FBWU attended the conference and joined FAWU.

Despite the UWUSA attacks on COSATU unions, FAWU is organised and recognised at four major factories in Northern Natal as well as at a number of small food factories. One of the FAWU factories is at Ngwelezana in KwaZulu itself where workers are not protected through legislation which applies to workers in the "white" areas of South Africa. COSATU leaders stressed the importance of extending South African labour legislation to cover union members in KwaZulu, but the KwaZulu government has made no move.

FAWU won a victory when it secured full pay for three workers detained under SOE regulations following international pressure on the British-based Cadbury company. FAWU not only had many of its members detained, but Mr Albion Sebhud Sehubudu (30) was shot dead near KwaThema hostel and two shop stewards — Mr John Tshabalala and Mr Sidwell Nxumalo — were shot while attending a meeting of SA Breweries. Another three FAWU members were shot dead outside a restaurant in Germiston after attending a union meeting.[15] For the past 8 months FAWU has been conducting a struggle with Clover Dairy Products for the reinstatement of their dismissed members, recognition of the union, higher wages and better conditions.

COSATU's vice-president Chris Dlamini, as president of FAWU, stated at FAWU's national conference in October 1986 that:

> "The unholy alliance of apartheid and capitalism has become obvious and concrete. One cannot expect to eradicate it simply by removing apartheid, nor can economic transformation come about by merely organising workers into unions and demanding a living wage and good working conditions. What we are talking about is total change of the present system in its entirety. It will only come through struggles waged by all progressive forces of our people".[16]

COSATU has assigned the task of organising farm workers to FAWU, to build a solid bridge between workers in the cities and countryside. The food workers in our country will not only bring about better wages and conditions of work but will also make a contribution to the eradication of the apartheid regime and the building of a democratic South Africa.

Domestic Workers Unite

On November 29 and 30, 1986, the South African Domestic Workers' Union (SADWU) was formed in Cape Town as a result of a merger of several domestic workers' unions from the western and eastern Cape, Natal and the Transvaal. They declared 1987 the "Year of the Domestic Worker" to stand up and fight for their rights, for the rights of the most oppressed and exploited sector of the workforce with the greatest number of women workers. The new union will maintain unity in the working class struggle under the umbrella of COSATU and will work with other progressive organisations to fight for a democratic South Africa.

Their top priority will be the fight to include domestic workers in the country's labour legislation. The union's next priority will be the fight to redress the present intolerable working conditions — instant dismissals, low wages, long working hours and poor pay. The union resolved to campaign for a minimum wage of R200 per month, unemployment benefits, a 40-hour week i.e. 5 days per week and 8 hours per day, workers' compensation, annual paid leave, paid sick leave, maternity benefits and overtime at R2.50 per hour.

SADWU claims a membership of 50,000. There are still many, many thousands to be organised. This is not an easy job and this mass of unorganised workers cannot be organised by the union alone. Although domestic workers are organising themselves at street level and in area committees, SADWU needs to be helped in organising unorganised domestic workers in order to make it a strong force and to enable it to implement its resolutions.

Construction Workers

COSATU launched its Construction and Allied Workers' Union (CAWU) as a step in its campaign to organise the unorganised. Present at the launch were delegates from Witwatersrand, Phalaborwa, Pretoria, Pietersburg, southern and northern Natal, western Cape Province, Bloemfontein and the Eastern Cape, who were there with observer status.

Seven unions contributed to this merger. To achieve it meetings of workers employed in building, construction, civil engineering, the manufacturing sector and stone crushing were held in the regions from June 1986 onwards. The Eastern Cape region could not participate because unionists were in detention or hiding. An interim executive committee consisting of one coordinator from each of the seven unions and office-bearers was formed. The coordinators and office-bearers will concentrate on forming branches where none have been constituted, will work to strengthen CAWU nationally and will bring about a constitutional congress to elect a national executive committee. Desmond Mahashe, formerly a General and Allied Workers' Union organiser, has been elected general secretary and David Ngcobo, a shop steward for Grinaker and formerly in MAWU, an executive member.

The guiding principle that brought the diverse unions together was that of "one industry one union" and a commitment to "total workers' control and the need to have strong shop floor structures".

CAWU's 30,000 members are a small proportion of the potential workforce. In all the total workforce in the sector was about 303,900 in July 1986[17] and the Building, Construction and Allied Workers' Union (BCAWU) — a CUSA affiliate — claims a membership of over 40,000, of whom 22,000 are paid up. The struggle is to convince them to unite with CAWU.

The average wage rate for African construction workers stood at R421 a month in July 1986, which included allowances, bonuses and overtime, compared to R2,118 a month for whites. CAWU is calling for a living wage of R4 an hour and has organised a women's committee to mobilise around the needs of women workers, including the fight for maternity benefits.

The building and construction sector has a high degree of monopolisation. One third of the bosses employ 80 per cent of the workers and black workers make up more than 68% or almost 200,000 of the total labour force. Black construction workers however earn only 40 per cent of the total wage paid out in the industry. The industry faces seasonal and economic fluctuations and the dispersed nature of the work sites with a high number of migrant and casual workers makes it possible for employers to retrench the entire workforce after completing a project and to recruit a new work team for the next job. Working conditions in the industry are generally bad, workers are sworn at and are still called kaffirs.

CAWU therefore has to bring about a united labour force to fight for higher wages, better conditions of work and to stand against the ever threatening retrenchment of workers. It is estimated that over 124,000 jobs have been lost in the building industry in the period 1982-1986. This high rate of retrenchment and cuts-back is made even more bitter by the acute housing shortage which the black community faces. It is therefore vital that the struggle to organise construction and building workers is linked to the fight for housing being waged by the black community as a whole.

CAWU has adopted a number of resolutions to strengthen its organisation: to apply for registration in terms of the Labour Relations Act; to achieve recognition agreements and the right to automatic stop orders.

It declared that the working class is the most exploited and oppressed class; that the needs of workers can only be met in a society run by workers in the interests of workers — i.e. a socialist society; and that "the union will actively participate in the struggle for a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa."[18]

Workers in the Commercial and Catering Sector

The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA) is one of COSATU's major affiliates. In its past 15 years of existence it conducted many strikes and won recognition agreements, higher wages, maternity benefits and better conditions of work. It has participated in many campaigns such as the calling of the boycott of the tri-cameral elections in August 1984, the UDF's one million signatures campaign to show the mass rejection of the new constitution and Koornhof's new influx control bills, and in the formation of COSATU as well as in all its campaigns.

Last year CCAWUSA was engaged in negotiations with OK Bazaars. It is organised in 137 OK stores throughout the country. The union cannot organise in "homeland" stores and it is banned in Venda and Bophutatswana.[19]

By December 18, 1986, negotiations had reached deadlock, conciliation failed and workers decided to strike. CCAWUSA, in clearly formulated demands, called for:

(i) R160 per month across the board increases, covering the period April 1986-March 1988;
(ii) a R450 a month minimum wage;
(iii) a 20% staff discount on purchases instead of the present 10%;
(iv) workers in the bantustans to receive the same increases;
(v) women on maternity leave to receive a pro rata proportion of the annual bonus when they leave and on their return from maternity leave that they should receive the same increase in their wages;
(vi) the unconditional reinstatement of those dismissed during the strike;
(vii) the reinstatement of benefits withdrawn during the strike e.g. the 1986 bonus and privileged leave.

The regime and management harassed the strikers. Those who picketed were arrested but workers did not hesitate to stand on the picket line. Shop stewards and union officials were denied access to stores. CCAWUSA offices around the country were subjected to police raids and many shop stewards and officials were detained. CCAWUSA however received strong moral and material support from their union members, from other unions and community organisations. CCAWUSA's organised stores pledged between R5 and R10 per month to help those on strike. Support committees were set up consisting of representatives from a very wide range of unions and community organisations.

OK made R13 million profit in the 12 months up to March 1986. By September 1986 it had gained another R9 million. While OK depended on support from the regime and other capitalists, the strikers received massive support from unions and community organisations. This strength of solidarity was excellently displayed when shop-stewards from CCAWUSA, FAWU, NUM, MAWU, PWAWU (Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union) and CWIU (Chemical Workers' Industrial Union) representing work places which directly or indirectly were owned or controlled by Anglo-American — the major monopoly and multinational with a huge stake in OK — came together in support of CCAWUSA and the OK strikers.

OK Bazaars management evaluated the situation. The 11,000 strikers stuck it out and after 10 weeks — the longest strike in the retail trade — employers and CCWUSA signed an agreement. They settled for:

a) R100 across-the-board increases per month payable in instalments of R50 in April and R50 in November;
b) a raising of the minimum wage to R400 per month;
c) a 12% staff discount;
d) the reinstatement of 364 of the 510 dismissed workers and
e) the reinstatement of all privileged leave forfeited as a result of the strike action.

Average Monthly Wages in the Retail Sector for the last Quarter — 1986

African — R366 Asian and Coloured — R408 White — R962
(Central Statistical Services)

The 11,000 striking workers received no money during the strike.

The spirit of the workers has increased over this period in time. They used sit-ins to prevent normal business and the employment of scabs. Police intervention and hard-line management strengthened the membership, who have clearly seen the connection between capital and political oppression. They are now far more politicised. In their own words:

> "We have observed a consolidation of solidarity action, particularly on the part of FAWU members which would have been unthinkable before the formation of COSATU. COSATU and CCAWUSA have grown a lot out of this experience".[20]

These observations confirm the statement by Frederick Engels:

> "Strikes are the military school of the working men in which they prepare themselves for the great struggle which cannot be avoided. As schools of war the unions are unexcelled."[21]

CCAWUSA has signed or is discussing 88 recognition agreements nationally. As negotiations have to be conducted individually at each of these stores, CCAWUSA has been forced to build "a strong shop steward structure capable of organising rapid responses to political and economic grievances on the shop floor", a union official said. [22]

Through the experience of 10 weeks of strike action the union has been enriched with many more dedicated leaders who will not only be of great help to CCAWUSA itself, but will help to organise the unorganised in the way forward.

SARHWU Reemerges

COSATU's organising drive has received a further boost with the railway and harbour workers — employees of the South African Transport Services (SATS) — coming together with the reemergence of the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU). It is a struggle fraught with many difficulties.

The administration has a history of repression against black railway unions. It suppressed the Non-European Railway and Harbour Workers' Union which was organised in April 1936. It used all kinds of laws to harass the union in the 1940's, '50's and 60's. Union organisers have been detained and tortured to death — the late Comrade Lawrence Ndzanga was one of the victims.

When the General Workers' Union (GWU), having organised stevedores, obtained recognition of their communities and agreements which guaranteed stevedores higher wages and better conditions of work, harbour workers called for recognition, staging successful "go slow strikes" in Port Elizabeth and East London. SATS refused any meeting with GWU. Workers were harassed, intimidated, dismissed and arrested. In this way, SATS, using its own police force, broke up the Harbour Workers' Committees. SATS management is totally against "freedom of association" and collective bargaining. It only deals with separate "in-house" staff associations for white, Coloured, Indian and African employees.

SATS Employment:

Total: 240,237
African: 110,160
White: 109,710
Coloured: 18,377
Indian: 1,990

SATS announced that its Black Staff Association had 60,000 members and that it would "only recognise a union to negotiate with if we are happy and satisfied that this would lead to labour peace".

GWU leadership recognised that SATS employees could not be organised by one union on its own. COSATU, although recognising the divisions among railway workers, assisted in launching the SA Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU) which was really a revival of the old SA Congress of Trade Unions union and was actually represented at the launch of COSATU in November 1985.

SARHWU launched a campaign for membership and for workers to resign from the Black Staff Association. It submitted a list of 19 demands to SATS all of which related to living conditions in the railway hostels. The main grievance was food. The workers embarked on a boycott of hostel food, but SATS refused to recognise or even meet with SARHWU.

Despite assurances from the Minister of Transport guaranteeing "freedom of association" for workers, union organisers have been harassed and the union's general secretary Nthai Sello, some shop stewards and an organiser were detained. SATS is using the SADF to smash the union. Thousands of letters of resignation from the Staff Association have been confiscated by the security police.[23] COSATU has strongly condemned this heavy handed action, stating that black railway workers were the "most exploited and the victims of severe racialism at the workplace". Their statement went on to declare that railway workers have the right "to take their place alongside other workers in working for a new South Africa free from the chains of apartheid oppression"[24].

Working Class Solidarity

SATS lost more than R5 million in 6 weeks because of a provocative dispute with a worker, Andrew Nendzanda, who was fired for handing in R40.40 late. His dismissal sparked off industrial action which involved 18,000 workers at 23 depots. By the time the strike had entered its sixth week it had virtually crippled the distribution network and blocked SATS container service to harbours around the country.

Andrew Nendzanda, a member of SARHWU, maintains that SATS tried to victimise him. On 24.10.1986 he had to deliver a container to Springs and collect R40.40 payment. When he returned to the depot the cashier's office was closed. As it was a Friday he had to keep the money with him and paid it in first thing on Monday morning before taking his first delivery. He was given a receipt, but the next day he was called to the office and asked to explain why he had cashed in late. He gave the explanation and they seemed to accept it.

Almost five months later, on March 11, 1987, Andrew Nendzanda was summoned again, told he was going to be "disciplined" and given an envelope containing two letters — one suspending him from work and the other dismissing him. He showed the letters to his colleagues who enquired why he was not working. The drivers at once called a meeting and decided not to go to work until he was reinstated. Once the strike started SATS called in the union shop stewards at City Deep and told them they had reconsidered Nendzanda's case and had decided to demote him to the level of labourer instead of firing him. This was rejected by the workers.[25]

The strike is the largest and sharpest conflict on the railways in more than 70 years. The raging battle is very bitter and bloody, costing many lives and much property. Workers have been killed, trains have been destroyed and trade and communications have been seriously disrupted. In provoking the railway workers SATS did not anticipate the depth of anger nor the strength of solidarity that the growth of trade unionism under the banner of COSATU has engendered in the black working class. SATS has ended up by sacking all 18,000 strikers, but that is not the end of the story.

In spite of all differences, railway and harbour workers must face SATS tyranny by uniting into one union, getting rid of the staff associations for African, Indian and Coloured workers, and forcing SATS to negotiate with the union to satisfy the immediate demands of the workers. Examining the resolutions adopted by the National Union of Railway Workers launched on November 29-30, 1986, there are no fundamental differences with SARHWU and a meeting convened by COSATU could and should bring about unity. The same applies to the African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union (ARAHWU), a CUSA affiliate, and the black trade union of SATS (BTUS). Railway and harbour workers must be organised as a single force to stand up for their rights and to withstand the SATS anti-worker offensive.

Unions in the Metal Sector Set to Merge

Merger talks between three major unions organising in the metal and motor industries began in early 1986. The coming together of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU), both of which are COSATU affiliates, and MICWU (the Motor Industries Component Workers' Union — a former TUCSA affiliate) will bring together over 100,000 organised workers, making the new union COSATU's second largest affiliate. In talks between the unions the matter of whether metal and motor workers should be organised separately has been cleared up and they have agreed to form one union for the entire industry. The unions have also drafted a constitution which provides for structures based on shop stewards at factory level, local shop stewards' councils, regional executive committees for the expected 12 regions and a national congress.

MAWU, one of the largest and most dynamic unions affiliated to COSATU which has been actively working for union merger in the sector, has been a major target of state repression. Many members have been held in detention from the onset of the SOE and vicious and costly attacks have been launched against members, shop stewards, organisers and officials by vigilantes acting in the interests of the bosses and the regime. MAWU leader Moses Mayekiso is at present facing a charge of treason.

This year's merger is very important for the Industrial Council negotiations between workers in the sector and the industry's steel and engineering federation — SEIFSA.

Organised Workers on the March

The consolidation, growth and expansion of the democratic trade union movement owes much to the leadership given by COSATU and the strength of its affiliates. The positive change in the character and style of COSATU and its affiliates for the democratic trade union movement is that shop stewards are welding themselves into councils — at the local, regional and national level and in industries — to forge greater national workers' unity within and across industrial sectors. The extent and depth of this unity herald a new challenge to that tiny minority of monopoly corporations — 7 in all — who control more than 80% of South Africa's wealth.

Although the trade union movement is still fragmented and many unions still have to come together, the mergers described and the growing shop-steward movement augur well for the unity of the working class. They are the major force in COSATU's campaign for a living wage, a campaign which

COSATU sees as striking at "the very heart of the profit system". If the bosses' capitalist system cannot provide the workers with what they need to live decently, the system must be replaced by one which can.

We have a very bitter proletariat deprived of land rights, a proletariat which when organised into a single united force will wrest the land and political rights to build a free, non-racial democratic South Africa.

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THE TWO STAGES OF OUR REVOLUTION

By Sisa Majola

LENIN: "The complete victory of the present revolution will mark the end of the democratic revolution and the beginning of a struggle for a socialist revolution".[1]

As our liberation struggle approaches victory, South African history is also distinguished during this period by a general increase in the debate about what the post-apartheid society will be like. The article "National Liberation, Socialism and the Freedom Charter" contributed by Observer in *The African Communist* (First Quarter, 1987) demonstrates very well how this debate has flourished in the pages of various journals and periodicals in our country. Yet this debate also shows how little as yet some of our people are informed about our line of march, the stages that our revolution will necessarily pass through, as well as about scientific socialism and the methods of achieving it.

Perhaps, to a certain extent, this shortcoming also reflects the insufficient attention that our Party has given to socialist propaganda among the people in general and the working class in particular, as the ideas about socialism gain an increasingly firm root in the minds of the revolutionary masses who have discovered, almost by instinct, that capitalism is at the root of their misery. The rate at which our revolution is growing demands a corresponding attention to the education of the working people about the theory of our revolution and about the path leading to socialism.

As far as the Communist Party is concerned (and this is clearly stated in our Programme), we make no secret of our belief that South Africa is at present undergoing a process of social change which will ultimately lead to the elimination of capitalism and its replacement by a society based on the socialist principle: "From Each According to Ability, And To Each According to Work Performed".

The task of a Marxist revolutionary, under all circumstances, is to determine correctly, on the basis of a comprehensive political and economic analysis, the specific features of the development of the revolutionary process at any given stage and to determine the strategy and tactics of the working class struggle for its liberation accordingly.

Unsolved Colonial Question

The objectives of a revolution are determined by the historical period in which the struggle of the oppressed masses takes place.

The most prominent and immediate source of conflict in South Africa is the division of its population into a large and oppressed people, who have been robbed of their right to political and economic independence, on the one hand, and a group of colonisers (who form the minority of the population) on the other, who in turn possess all the wealth of the country, and control the political administrative institutions as well as the armed forces to keep the black people in subjection.

South Africa gives the appearance of a truly independent and sovereign state in the sense that it is not subject to the sovereignty of any other state at this historical period. It also conforms to the historical tendency of a developing capitalism to form a national state with a common economic life within a united territory. However, it cannot be considered a true model of this tendency since the overwhelming majority of its population are not only excluded from its "sovereignty" but are also made subject to it, a typical characteristic of a colonised people denied their right to self-determination.

The need for the solution of the colonial question arises only during the epoch of imperialism in world history, an epoch in which the world is divided among privileged oppressor nations that oppress other nations. And since in South Africa we have not yet resolved the principal political contradiction of this imperialist epoch, namely, the liberation of the oppressed, this circumstance places us in the pre-independence era of African history.

This in turn creates an obstacle to the achievement of unity in the struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation and for socialism, because the South African working class is divided on national lines. The identity of class interest is overlaid by national differentiation. Yet in order to establish working-class power, the working class must be constituted as a class for itself, with a distinct class consiousness. It must acquire the capacity to rule the nation as a class.

This estrangement and lack of trust among the South African workers arises because, to a large degree, the workers of the oppressor nation are partners of their own bourgeoisie in plundering the workers (and the mass of the population) of the oppressed nation. They occupy a privileged position in many spheres of political life. They are prepared to defend even by force of arms the crumbs they receive from the profits which the bourgeoisie of their own nation obtain by super-exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nation. The ruling class's ideological institutions (be it school or church) have successfully taught them disdain and contempt for the workers of the oppressed nation.

Although South Africa is indisputably a capitalist society, and the black workers experience extreme exploitation under this mode of production, they are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of national inequality and the violation of their right to national independence and self-determination. To pose the question of socialism as the immediate goal of liberation under these circumstances is to be abstract, since the hearts and minds of the people are still dominated by the need to settle scores with the regime of national oppression.

A Democratic Republic

The urgent political aim of our revolution is to establish a democratic republic. This aim has been defined in the Freedom Charter, which is also endorsed by the Communist Party. But why does a Party of internationalism support a programme of nationalism? Are the two not opposite world outlooks, two incompatible ideologies? What is the importance of a socialist supporting a programme of national democracy which is within a bourgeois socio-economic framework?

The Freedom Charter, while proposing to restrict the operations of the monopoly capitalists, does not contemplate the abolition of the capitalist system as such. In fact, the Freedom Charter envisages the development of small-scale capitalist enterprises as a result of the elimination of the various colour barriers. The Charter says, for example, that all people "shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions." The black middle strata probably understand the meaning of this phrase better than anyone else, because it is they in particular who have been deprived by the colonial regime of this *bourgeois* right. This clause of the Freedom Charter implies the opening of the ground, for the first time in the history of South Africa, for the wide and non-racially orientated development of commodity production.

Even the demand that "restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided among those who work it, to banish famine and hunger", does not necessarily propose, objectively speaking, the nationalisation of the land under state control. This distribution of the land in favour of the peasants and in accordance with their desires may (depending on the subsequent course of events) give an impetus to production competition in the countryside and lead to the class disintegration of the peasantry itself.

We know that the Freedom Charter is not a programme for socialism, but our Party pledges its unqualified support for it because we agree with its demands both from the standpoint of the immediate aim of the black workers and also from the standpoint of our final aim of socialism. The struggle for a democratic republic has a definite revolutionary meaning. It means the overthrow of racist autocracy and the complete transfer of power to the people, the majority of whom are the working people. It also means beginning a process that will take decisive measures to limit the rule by monopoly capitalism in South Africa's national economy. Although all these measures in themselves will not abolish the exploitation of man by man, however, by radically and systematically reducing the political and economic power of the monopoly capitalists, they will create favourable conditions for democratic advance and open up the possibility for the transition to socialism.

When some anarchists in Russia accused the Bolshevik party of putting off the socialist revolution by advocating this first democratic stage, Lenin replied that "we are not putting it off, but are taking the first step towards it in the only possible way, along the only correct path, namely, the path of a democratic republic. Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of a political democracy, will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary both in the economic and political sense" ("The Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution," *Collected Works* Vol. 9, p.29).

Lenin further indicated that only the most naive optimist can forget how little as yet the masses of the workers are informed about socialism and the methods of achieving it. This was understandable because, as we all know, the emancipation of the working class must be won by the working class itself; a social revolution is out of the question "unless the masses become conscious and organised, trained, and educated in a conscious and open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie". (Ibid).

Struggle For Leadership of the Democratic Revolution

The fact that the struggle for a democratic republic involves all classes of the oppressed nation, does not mean that the working class must keep aloof from it and wait on the sidelines for the advent of some coming socialist revolution. The working class should always be aware that imperialism is waiting in ambush, preparing its own forces which seek to take over the leadership of this revolution in order to end it with a bargain with the racist regime, and bring about a neo-colonial solution to the South African problem. No matter how educated in universities and articulate some petty-bourgeois intellectuals can be, the working class must not allow the leadership of the national democratic revolution to be assumed by those who want to bring about its miscarriage. On the contrary, the working class must take the most active part in it and, indeed, fight to be its leader so that this revolution can be carried to its conclusion, to a decisive victory.

As early as 1905, twelve years before the socialist revolution in Russia, Lenin warned that only the proletariat can be a consistent fighter for democracy. He added that it can become a victorious fighter for democracy *only* if it joins the revolutionary struggle of the whole people with an intention of putting a working class imprint on it, and pushing it to those limits under its leadership so as to have it as a favourable base for the working class's further struggle for socialism. If the working class is not strong enough for this role, Lenin insisted, then the bourgeoisie will be at the head of the national democratic revolution and will impart an inconsistent and self-seeking nature to it.

In other words, the outcome of the revolution depends on whether the working class will play the part of a subordinate to the other class forces involved in the democratic revolution or whether it will play the part of the leader of this revolution.

The working class in South Africa has all the makings enabling it to become the leader of the national democratic revolution. Firstly — on account of its position in social production, the working class is the most advanced and the only thoroughly revolutionary class; secondly — the black working class is objectively interested in the complete victory of the democratic revolution, because such a victory will strengthen its organisation and political power, and will ensure the best conditions for it, using the conquered state power to lead the masses to socialism; and thirdly — the working class has its independent political party that is armed with scientific revolutionary theory, namely, the South African Communist Party.

The Conquest of Power

In order to establish people's power and have complete freedom to discuss and adopt a new constitution for a democratic republic founded on the principles of the Freedom Charter, our revolution must conquer power and secure popular victory. Complete freedom will only become possible when the racist regime has been overthrown, and when we have conducted democratic elections throughout the country in order to set up a truly constituent People's Assembly, one vested with the authority and sovereignty to declare the newly adopted country's constitution the fundamental law of the country.

A people's constitution will be the product of the people's victory, embodying their understanding of the scope and depth of their achievements. That is why a prerequisite for the adoption of such a constitution is that it should be discussed in a completely free atmosphere by the vast masses of the South African population in both their residential and work places. The constitution for a future liberated South Africa cannot be the outcome of a deal with the racist regime, and neither should it be a sheer product of legal experts sitting in the seclusion of their offices. In advocating for the Freedom Charter, we are advocating for the democratic processes in decision-making and government.

In analysing the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1848-49 in Germany as the prologue of the socialist revolution, Marx and Engels made it plain that it could carry out its tasks *only if power were seized by the people.* The revolutionary people had to take all state power into their hands, and set up a provisional revolutionary government determined to crush the resistance of the reactionary classes and complete the revolution. Such a government had to rely on the revolutionary initiative of the people, carry out their will and act dictatorially with regard to the enemies of the revolution. They emphasized that any provisional state administration set up after the revolution had to be "an energetic dictatorship".[2]

The experience of the first Russian revolution also brought Lenin to the same conclusion, that a victorious democratic revolution effected under the leadership of the working class, brings into being a new type of state power, one that differs fundamentally from the bourgeois-democratic state — it is "a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants". This new type of state power is the people's political instrument for completing the democratic revolution and preparing the conditions for the transition to a socialist revolution. Such a people's government would enforce fundamental democratic changes only if it came about through victory. "And such a victory," said Lenin writing in *The Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution,*

> "will be precisely a dictatorship, that is, it must inevitably rely on military force, on the arming of the masses, on an insurrection, and not on institutions of one kind or another established in a 'lawful' or 'peaceful' way . . . Without a dictatorship it is impossible to break down that resistance and repel counter-revolutionary attempts."

Our Attitude To A Negotiated Settlement

Does this mean that the Party that stands for complete political freedom as a condition for realising the possibilities for the transition to socialism does not recognise the legitimacy of a negotiated settlement?

The seizure of power by armed insurrection is, for us Communists, and equally for all revolutionary democrats (as distinct from liberal democrats) the most advantageous as far as the creation of conditions for people's democracy against the imperialists are concerned, but then this is a path that depends on and requires our greatest strength. The negotiated settlement, or a "forced" way, comes about because there is not enough strength and a temporary compromise is taken.

Appraising both options before the October Revolution, Lenin stressed:

> "A Marxist is bound to fight for the direct revolutionary path of development when such a fight is prescribed by the objective state of affairs".[3]

If we are forced to take a zig-zag path, the round-about way, created by conditions absolutely beyond our control, and not because we are feeble and not organising sufficiently for the armed insurrection, then we shall not be inflexible to tactics; the Communist Party can be relied on to be faithful to its principles, to the working class and its revolutionary purpose.

That is why our Programme states:

> "The Communist Party considers that the slogan of 'non-violence' is harmful to the cause of the democratic revolution in the new phase of struggle, disarming the people in the face of the savage assaults of the oppressor, dampening their militancy, undermining their confidence in their leaders."

But then goes on to explain:

> "The Party does not dismiss all prospects of non-violent transition to the democratic revolution. This prospect will be enhanced by the development of revolutionary and militant people's forces. The illusion that the white minority can rule forever over a disarmed majority will crumble before the reality of an armed and determined people."

Incidentally, this is the same position on the question of negotiations that is taken by the African National Congress. For our liberation alliance, it does not matter much whether the end of apartheid is brought about by insurrection or through the above-mentioned peaceful transition, as long as the end result will be the birth of a people's democracy on South African soil, one that will exercise the dictatorship of the people against the remnants of racist and imperialist counter-revolution.

Class Nature of our National Democratic Revolution

If (as we have already argued) the victory of our national democratic revolution will not yet overstep the bounds of bourgeois social and economic relationships, will this mean the strengthening of capitalism and the rule of the bourgeoisie?

Since the Freedom Charter is a programme of people's democracy (and by 'people' we refer to the working class, the peasantry, other revolutionary petty-bourgeoisie and the democratic intelligentsia), a democratic republic founded on its basis will extend beyond the framework of the classical understanding of "bourgeois democracy" (which implies the rule of the bourgeoisie). There are two basic reasons for this. Firstly, it is the working class that will be the leading force in the new state, and will use its strategic position so that the revolution will be to its advantage rather than to that of the bourgeoisie. Already the Freedom Charter expresses this notion when it promises to control all other industries for the benefit of the people. In this way, the Freedom Charter curtails the right of the bourgeoisie to manufacturing and trade in whatever manner they choose, it puts a condition to this right, and that clearly expresses the political will of those who till now have been the victims of bourgeois exploitation.

Secondly, the successful implementation of the whole democratic programme and the stability of the new republic will depend on the skilful combination of pressure by the armed working class on the government both from above and from below, with the aim of putting further revolutionary transformations into effect. The achievement of a democratic republic will not signal the end of class struggle, but will instead shift the spotlight on to the class contradictions within the democratic bloc, to the struggle for leadership of the democratic process, since the final outcome of the revolution, including the possibility of the transition to socialism, will largely depend on the victory of the working class in the class struggle against those that seek to halt the further development of the revolution.

Here then lies the importance of the independence of the Communist Party within the democratic alliance, as the undiluted champion of the interest of the proletariat, which must never obscure its final objective: the abolition of the capitalist system, and through socialist transformation of the country, to attain a classless Communist society. The Party embodies the totality of the aspirations of the working class, and this is why to us Communists the democratic republic of the Freedom Charter is only the beginning of a political process that will ultimately end with the establishment of socialism.

This class nature of our national democratic revolution, however, is not an arbitrary dictation of the Communists; it is not a strategy smuggled into the national liberation programme by the Communist Party. This characterisation has an objective historical basis. Lenin wrote in *Critical Remarks on The National Question* in reply to one Liebman of the Jewish Bund:

> "Developing capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, and the creation of new states. The second is the development and the growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.
>
> "Both tendencies are a universal law of capitalism. The former predominates in the beginning of its development, the latter characterises a mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society."

Fundamental in our theory of revolution in South Africa (including from the point of view of the ANC) is the aligning of our approach on the national question with the social content of our epoch, that is, with the stage of historical development. This has meant that we should make a clear distinction between the two periods of the growth of capitalism, since they have different implications for the solution of the national question.

The typical feature of the first tendency of capitalism was the struggle for power led by the bourgeoisie against feudalism whose aim was the formation of nation states. When the ideologists of this movement cried out for "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" in the 18th century, they were signalling the final consolidation of capitalism and its victory over the feudal order. This was the period of the birth of the national question. Impelled by powerful economic factors, this bourgeois movement promoted nationalism and stood for national unity, including the subordination of the aspirations of the working class to that "national unity". Obviously, this nationalism was hiding the fact that the bourgeoisie was establishing yet another exploitative economic system.

The situation, however, changes radically during the imperialist period, the highest stage of capitalism, when industry and everything else are internationalised, including the proletariat. During this stage, the bourgeoisie begins to fear its own nation, particularly as the working class forges its own class weapons and becomes strong enough to challenge the exploitation of labour by capital. The movement for national liberation that arises during this epoch does not only desire the political kingdom but also insists on social emancipation from the domination of capital. This development then objectively changes the social content of the national movement, in which the working class is already playing the role of leader.

What historical period is South Africa passing through? And what are the implications for the South African liberation movement during this period? The inevitable conclusion for our liberation movement is contained in the 1969 Strategy and Tactics Document of the ANC which says:

> "(Ours) is a national struggle which is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. It is happening in a new kind of world — a world which is no longer monopolised by the imperialist world system; a world in which the existence of the powerful socialist system and a significant sector of newly liberated areas has altered the balance of forces; a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the element which makes such control meaningful — economic emancipation. It is also happening in a new kind of South Africa; a South Africa in which there is a large and well-developed working class whose class consciousness and in which the independent expressions of the working people — their political organs and trade unions — are very much part of the liberation front. Thus, our nationalism must not be confused with the chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass."

In the past epoch, the national democratic revolutions were part of the bourgeoisie's ascent to power and were carried out under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, because at that time the bourgeoisie was representing the advanced relations of production and sought to bring them into line with the character of the productive forces. During our epoch, however, the national democratic revolution is being accomplished under the leadership of the working class, a class that, owing to the growth of the productive forces in society, has become the principal political force, and which constitutes the important link in the struggle against capitalism for the establishment of socialism. The primary contradiction of this epoch is between labour and capital (on the other hand it is between socialism and capitalism). That is why our drive towards national emancipation is in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation, and this perspective is made more real "by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness". (ANC Strategy and Tactics Document, 1969.)

Uninterrupted Transition to Socialism

The transition to socialism is a logical continuation of the democratic revolution. Our revolution is one continuing process. Its immediate emphasis and the chief mobilising factor, namely, black liberation, has strategic relevance for the transition to socialism. In this sense, the national democratic revolution can be regarded as a transitional phase (but a *transition* only if under working class leadership) to socialism. The revolutionary democracy expressed in the Freedom Charter is not a static but a dynamic socio-political category; there exist in it the possibility and necessity for movement to the future.

We may recall that Lenin assessed the two revolutions under imperialism as two stages of a single revolutionary process. His approach to the world's revolutionary transformation was not one of a single act but a process involving several stages. In other words, the people's republic becomes a political instrument for the workers to advance the revolution to socialism. And the growth of this national democratic revolution into a socialist revolution is achieved not spontaneously but as a result of the class struggle of the workers against those bourgeois elements that want to bring it to a standstill.

The Marxist method is therefore the following: that while we draw the necessary distinction between those two stages of the revolution, we should always regard them from the standpoint of the working class, which participates in both, leads both, and consequently sees them as two links in its struggle against capitalism — that is, the democratic revolution creating conditions for, and being the transitional stage to, the socialist revolution, which in turn is the direct continuation and consummation of the former.

In actual historical circumstances, Lenin argued, the elements of the past become interwoven with those of the future; the two paths cross. South Africa in this regard is one of the most illuminating examples of how particular elements of the two revolutions become interwoven . . . because in our country, there is the interlacing of colonialism with capitalism. We have, existing together, simultaneously, both colonial rule and capitalist exploitation. The implications of this are that if the Freedom Charter succeeds, the working class will already have one foot on the ladder to socialism, to put it metaphorically.

Under these conditions, there exists an objective possibility in South Africa for the national democratic revolution proceeding at once, without any interruption, without procrastination, without waiting for the advent of another "October". This view has already been advanced on many occasions in the pages of *The African Communist*:

T. Singh: "Revolution is an uninterrupted process, and the socialist revolution advances immediately from the democratic in a single continuum";[4]

Christos Theodoropoulos: "In this complex process there are no mechanically understood stages such as first the solution of the national and then that of the social question. These proceed simultaneously, are dialectically linked and the one directly influences the other";[5]

Sol Dubula: "There is no Chinese Wall between these stages; they flow from and into one another, and the dominant ingredients of later stages must already have begun to mature within the womb of the earlier stage. This is what Marxist dialectics teach us."[6]

Whether this transition will be effected only by the Communist Party or it will be joined by a developed ANC (developed in the manner in which the MPLA and FRELIMO respectively reconstituted themselves as workers' parties), is a pure speculative question, to which we shall not address ourselves at this instance. And whether, again, the period of transition from national democracy to socialist revolution will be long or short will depend on the alignment of forces and the strength of the armed workers led by the revolutionary vanguard.

South Africa is already going through a new experience, whose true dimensions are still to be assessed as our revolution moves on. The emergence of organs of people's power in various districts opens up great and probably surprising opportunities for our struggle, and much as we shall teach these organs, so also must we be prepared to learn from them. The greatest virtue of a Communist is his ability to identify with history, rather than to identify history with himself.

FOOTNOTES

1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 9, p.130.
2. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 7 p.16 (Moscow, 1977).
3. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 13, p.34.
4. T. Singh, 'Vanguard Party In the Fight For Socialism', *The African Communist,* No. 90, 3rd Quarter, 1982, p.32.
5. Christos Theodoropoulos, 'Colonialism of a Special Type And Its Implications', *African Communist,* No. 91, 4th Quarter, 1982, p.65.
6. Sol Dubula, 'The Two Pillars of Our Struggle: Reflections on the Relationship between the ANC and SACP', *The African Communist,* No. 87, 4th Quarter, 1981, p.36.

APARTHEID
NO
to RACISM
&
APARTHEID

Communists and Christians in the South African Revolution — 1

THE COMRADESHIP OF MARX AND JESUS

By Cedric Mayson

former editor of *Pro Veritate,* organ of the now banned Christian Institute of Southern Africa.

Christians and Communists ought to be comrades in our struggle. Both are international; both champion justice, peace and a humanitarian society; both believe in the future and are called to dethrone tyrants on the way; both are proud of positive and embarrassed by negative chapters in their history; both have been warped by false prophets and deviationists, and have survived to refine their beliefs, their role, and objectives.

> "Regardless of the basic differences and subtle disagreements between the Christian viewpoint and the Marxist viewpoint, their prophetic and progressive wings share one fundamental similarity: commitment to the negation of what is and the transformation of prevailing realities in the light of the norms of individuality and democracy." (West 101)

And both are completely confused about what the other believes. For generations most Christians and Communists have seen one another as a threat, but often their disagreements are misunderstandings, and their invective inflames positions long since abandoned. The System has spent years and millions promoting Christian v Marxist conflict as part of the divide and rule policy upon which capitalist imperialism thrives. It encourages caricatures so that Christians whose knowledge of Marx is derived from Botha or Reagan, and Communists whose knowledge of Jesus depends on funeral orations or cynics penning popular traditions for press barons, spend their time firing ideological pot shots to fight one another's myths instead of uniting to dispose of the enemy. He fears our comradeship.

When the independence of India was a major issue Winston Churchill was urged to update his views on that subcontinent of the British Empire by discussing the matter with some Indians. Churchill replied: "I am quite satisfied with my views on India and I don't want them disturbed by any bloody Indians." ("Iqaqa aliziva kunuka!" *). The followers of Jesus and of Marx need disturbing if they scrap over past excesses and errors, instead of finding unanimity in the present struggle. They must educate themselves out of their misconceptions, and blast themselves out of their prejudices, because confusion and suspicion amongst allies is treason to the cause of freedom.
*("A polecat cannot smell its own stink!").

Religious workers

Many of the workers in South Africa, who hold the revolutionary struggle in their hands, adhere to one of the major religions or traditional beliefs. To ignore this is bad politics and bad theology, for it is as counter-productive to discriminate against believers as it is against unbelievers. People need a faith in tune with the revolution, and true religion includes a positive political and social analysis.

> "We must recognise the reality of religion to many of our people, even if it does not have the same meaning for us . . . There is always the danger of considering that what is obsolete to us is also obsolete to the masses. We should, at all times, go to where the masses are." (Thoko Mdlalose, *African Communist* 104).
>
> "Since even quite common people have souls, no increase in material wealth will compensate them for arrangements which insult their self-respect and impair their freedom . . . it must satisfy criteria which are not purely economic." (Tawney 278).

Many people require a focus for transcendent experiences and neglect of this by revolutionaries lays the masses open to the corruption of alienating anti-human fanatics with the charismatic romanticism of trivia or horror known in Hitler, Verwoerd, Rambo Reagan, Bantustan leaders and others. Capitalism deliberately distorts the ethical and the spiritual, and socialism's task is not to deny them, but to enable people to restore them to their proper wholesome place in revolutionary life and ensure we are not debased by the struggle, but inspired.

This is the experience of the African National Congress where Christians and Marxists have both played prominent roles, but the struggle has been confused because religions also need liberating. Part of the workers' revolutionary struggle is the liberation of theology from traditional beliefs which seem incomprehensible, irrelevant and immaterial, and ecclesiastical structures and practices which seem authoritarian, capitalistic, appeasing and supportive of the System. Progressive Christians believe that Jesus is important for the revolution, not by trying to make a god out of him (which he did not do for himself) but by putting his liberating message of the kingdom of God on Earth into action.

> "Only the working people in their struggle for life will prove or disprove that the Kingdom of God is good news for the poor." (Pixley 7)

The Struggle in Christianity

It is incorrect to speak of the 'role of the Church' in South Africa as if it were a homogeneous body which is for or against liberation. The Church is not an army but a battlefield. It is one of the places where the struggle is being waged, and it is necessary to analyse the forces involved in that conflict in relation to the revolution. Contrasting the white DRC which suports apartheid with the rest who don't lacks meaningful precision. Many Afrikaners reject apartheid which is actually practised by many English-speaking Protestant and Catholic Church groupings. Tensions run through them all.

During the recent State of Emergency progressive Christians have produced three revolutionary documents which focus the struggle being waged. The first and briefest bears the grandest title: *A Theological Rationale and a Call to Prayer for the End to Unjust Rule.* Produced by a group in the Western Cape for the June 16th Memorial Service of 1985, and couched in the considered ascetic language of academic theological debate, its authors explain that whilst previously they called for prayer for the government to change its policies, they now call people to pray for a change of government.

> "We have prayed for our rulers as is demanded from us in the scriptures. We have entered into consultation with them as is required by our faith . . . We now pray that God will replace the present structures of oppression with ones that are just, and remove from power those who persist in defying his laws, installing in their place leaders who will govern with justice and mercy."

This may sound slight, but the effect was as explosive as if the church in England called a Day of Prayer for the downfall of Thatcher, or the US church entered the election against Reagan.

From Soweto in September 1985 came a document called *A Challenge to the Church* but soon known universally by its subtitle: *The Kairos Document,* from a scripture word *kairos* which means that the moment of truth has arrived. This is a theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa which begins by denouncing what it calls *State Theology:* that Christians are bound to obey secular rulers, that law and order are sacrosanct (even if the law is unjust and the order is not right), and that communism is a symbol of evil. It states categorically that the god promoted by the oppressive South African regime is a false god, an idol, the anti-Christ.

The document then critiques the false assumptions which lie behind *Church Theology:* "Reconciliation" which sits down and accepts evil; "Justice" which is determined by oppressors and envisages no fundamental change in the structures of society; "Non-violence" which condones the violence of the State and puts it in the same light as defence against aggressors; and the Church's promotion of a false "faith and spirituality" which has little to do with the affairs of the world — and thus has no biblical foundation.

> "To be truly biblical our Church leaders must adopt a theology that millions of Christians have already adopted — a biblical theology of direct confrontation with the forces of evil rather than a theology of reconciliation with sin and the devil."

The Kairos Document advocates *Prophetic Theology* which makes an adequate social analysis, shows that the conquest of oppression and the dethroning of tyrants is the strong Christian tradition, assures hope, and calls people to side with God in the struggles of the oppressed.

> "The Church of Jesus Christ is not called to be a bastion of caution and moderation. The Church should challenge, inspire, and motivate people."

Evangelical Witness in South Africa was produced in June 1986 by a group of 'concerned evangelicals' which includes those belonging to the charismatic and pentecostal churches and groups. These 'born again' Christians are particularly aroused by the intrusion of western heresies.

> "To these groups and Churches what is called western Christian civilisation or the western capitalist culture is seen as identical with the Christian faith or the demands of the gospel. Any other system (especially economic) which is not necessarily capitalist is taken as being atheistic and therefore anti-Christian . . . it is

> the class interest of these people, their position of dominance in our society, their being beneficiaries of this racist apartheid system, which moves them rather than the gospel . . . Most of these groups undertake these campaigns with the aim of combatting what they call 'communism' or 'terrorism'. They are convinced that the western capitalist culture is a Christian culture and that all forms of socialism which they call communist are atheist and therefore anti-Christian . . . Winning souls to capitalism has become equal to winning souls for Christ . . . for us this can only be seen as coming from the devil."

The three documents, produced by small progressive groups (many now in detention or on the run) to challenge the Christian community as a whole are a major new development. They seem to smack more of Comrade Joe than Comrade Desmond. Their radicalism raises the question of what has happened to modern theology? What do progressive Christians believe, and how does it comport with the Communism of that 19th century religious critic, Karl Marx?

The Revolution in Theology

Modern theology has revolutionised traditional belief (like modern science, politics, economics, education, farming and all). Ideas about God, Scripture, Churches, religion and politics, and the relevance of theology to the liberation struggle, have all changed in the past generation. Theology no longer has a denominational base: progressive Christians do not compete as Methodists v Anglicans v Catholics v Protestants v Reformed: they think as Christians in this age, particularly when engaged in liberation struggles.

Marx accepted the prevalent agnosticism of his age.

> "Religion does not create man but man creates religion . . . Man's self-conciousness is the highest divinity . . . Religion is the formulation of an independent realm in the clouds which mystifies the cleavages and self-contradictions of its secular basis." (Early Texts of Karl Marx, 65 and 13.)

His best known quotation on religion highlights his compassionate view that religion is an expression of people's suffering, and an attempt to dull the pain.

> "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world and the soul of soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people . . ." (*C. W.*3.175)

Marx sought to analyse the materialist origins of religion, and turn the people's awareness from the illusions of religious resignation into politicisation.

> "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about their condition is a demand to give up the condition that requires illusion." (Marx E.T., 116)

Engels briefly attempted a more direct refutation of Christianity than Marx but never tackled the central issues. Before Christians jump up and down to denounce these ungodly Communists, they must reflect that 19th century religion is rejected far more comprehensively today *by Christians.* Read those old hymns and sermons, study the icons and statues, examine their finances and sponsorships, evaluate their political allegiances and social analyses: the god they postulated did not exist. Marx and Engels were correct to dismiss the theology and ecclesiasticism with which they were confronted, and today we do the same.

As the Christian Brennan observes:

> "Their atheism was a rejection of a false god, the god of power, oppression and exploitation: the god of this world. They rejected the false Christ who is sacrificed to this god and who preaches subservience to it. They rejected the spirit of personal profit seeking: the spirit of this world. In this rejection of idolatry and the false religion that is its cult they were following in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus Christ himself." (Brennan, 2)

God-talk reveals that most theists and atheists focus their belief or disbelief on a concept of god as a high and mighty emperor figure enthroned above them in splendour, before whose almightiness we poor sinners grovel. This baas-god, the leader of the upper classes to whom we must aspire, the rival and suppressor of the masses, isn't. It just isn't. If we need anthropomorphic concepts we must look for them in the god-images of Jesus: a classless one involved with the poor and oppressed in their struggles, who was the servant not the dominator of the masses, who sought to empower people not emasculate them, whose love was so liberated that he would rather die to defeat the power of the oppressor than live by perpetuating oppressive power. But Jesus is not expounding some Power above or separate from or in opposition to the human experience, but the true reality at the heart of it.

Spiritual or Material?

The apparent conflict between an idealistic, spiritualistic view of reality, and a materialist view, is a confusion promoted by these inherited religious images of throne-gods and sky-gods from which Jesus sought to save us, but the answer lies far beyond them.

> "It is not merely that the Old Man in the Sky is only a mythological symbol for the Infinite Mind behind the scene, nor yet that this Being is benevolent rather than fearful: the truth is that this whole way of thinking is wrong, and if such a Being did exist, he would be the very devil." (John Wren-Lewis 168).

The faith of Christians is not focussed on a Being out there somewhere, but on what Tillich calls 'the infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being' — the beingness, the basis of life, which we experience on earth here and now.

We have a materialist existence but our conciousness is not limited to its economic and political components. Love, joy, peace, hope, justice, perceptiveness are all doors to it. Failure to recognise the transcendental is an act of unscientific stupidity and failure to engage in the transcendental for the cause of liberation would be an act of criminal folly.

These deeply 'spiritual' qualities are at heart deeply 'materialist'. Love and justice mean pulling tyrants off their thrones and exalting the oppressed (Luke 1.52); food, housing, clothing, medical care, education, friendship, and the release of prisoners (Matthew 25.31); changing the structures of community life (Mark 6.30; Acts 2.44 and 4.32) and, if you will kindly translate the poetic language, God's Kingdom coming on Earth as it is in Heaven.

> "The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set free the oppressed, and to announce that the day has come when the Lord will save his people." (Jesus, Luke 4.18)

The greatest of spiritual assertions is thoroughly materialist.

The subversive Bible

It is no accident that progressive Christians, grasping for a 'modern' understanding of these 'ancient' truths, find themselves in confrontation with imperialism and capitalism, and discover that spiritual and theological truths enlighten the economic and political road to socialism. The central message of the Jewish and Christian religions has always been the liberation of the people. The Bible is not about establishing religious institutions or life after death, but about establishing social justice, peace and prosperity for all on Earth. It abounds in tender concern for children and women and men but its message is essentially societal not individualistic. It is both an inspiration and an analytical tool of the liberation struggles of humanity, and its heroes recognise our trouble is not only in our heads or our hearts but in our systems.

The Bible reveals constant conflict between 'kings and priests' on the one hand, and 'prophets and people' on the other. This is the theme of Moses and the slave workers liberating themselves from Pharaoh, of the social development of the kingdoms in Israel and Samaria, of the Prophets thundering denunciations of exploitation, forced removals, and oppressive regimes, right to Jesus and his disciples confronting the System in Jerusalem. The original unexpurgated Bible story is thoroughly subversive when liberated from the pietistic presentations which have obscured its revelation.

The process of freeing the person and teaching of Jesus from his superstitious religious packaging has been carried out intensively for over a century and we now have a far clearer knowledge of the Jesus before Christianity than before.

Jesus hardly mentioned sin and heaven: he targetted the rich and religious. His message was not that we ought to be good: people knew that. He was clobbered by a coalition of religious and political leaders because he deliberately challenged their economic and political oppression,and trashed their attempt to justify it on the ground of a traditional religion which 'made void the word of God'. The new society in which he believed was not a vast religious institution imposed from the top, but a movement which grew from within the people, prompting the new vision and power out of which the old society would be overcome and the new society emerge.

The revolutionary Jesus

The concept that drove Jesus was a totally new world view. His societal notion of the 'basileia', the kingdom of God, was of a movement at work in human affairs to establish a goodly society here on Earth. This 'basileia' was working amongst the people world wide, based on principles of sharing, justice, and caring, and rooted in the conviction that people can love one another in a classless society.

> "The revolution that Jesus wanted to bring about was far more radical than anything the Zealots or anyone else might have had in mind. Every sphere of life, political, economic, social and religious was radically questioned by Jesus and turned upside down." (Nolan, 97)

He called his disciples to commit their lives to the 'basileia' in the certain hope of ultimate victory, and from the early communistic unit established by his first followers in Jerusalem about AD 30 his ideas spread. The theological insights of the 'basileia' have been recognised in social economic and political experience ever since.

1500 years before capitalism was invented Jesus could not design a socialist solution, but the principles of the 'basileia' are totally opposed to the capitalist concept of the violent imposition of a ruling class to own and control the means of production, and of running the world on a system which promotes human antagonism instead of human love. R.H. Tawney, the British Christian socialist, after tracing the development of Jesus' thought through the Schoolmen priests of the Middle Ages writes:

> "The true descendant of the doctrines of Aquinas is the labour theory of value. The last of the Schoolmen was Karl Marx." (Tawney 48)

Why are we reared to see Jesus and Marx as antagonists, if there are actually deep affinities between them?

If you are building a civilisation based on injustice, immorality and greed, religion is an essential ingredient of convincing yourself that you are still an upright citizen. And if the Christian religion does not do that, you must distort it until it does. This is the oppressor's tactic employed in the 4th century by the Roman Emperor Constantine who hijacked Christianity by declaring himself a Christian and subjugating the church as a holy instrument of damning oppression. The Jesus movement became an organised and authorised religion, a controlling power related to the State, twisting the Gospel into a weapon of superstitious control, and securing power, wealth and lands in the hands of its princes.

The corruption of religion

Imperialist religion is a total negation of the society practised by Jesus, and leads to the civilising of injustice, the respectabilising of violence and cruelty, and the moralising of immorality. Oppressors believe that God rewards the righteous with riches and has appointed them to preserve civilisation by violent means, and the oppressed sucumb to the opiate of patient endurance for the good of their souls, a justification on both sides which is totally heretical.

Jesus' vision of the happy masses of children and women and men, living abundantly, standing on their feet with heads held high in hope and commitment, with a goodly society emerging about them, was replaced by a life of guilt and fear, whose only hope was in death, and a religion which demanded that grovelling sinners kiss the feet of priests and kings (or State Presidents).

This corrupt religion is the prurient garbage which Christianity became, against which the prophets and people have striven through the centuries, the false religion which Marx and Engels properly rejected and Lenin exposed as an instrument of oppression. This is the anti-Jesus masquerade which permeates so much of the life of our churches in South Africa, and is used in countless ways to make our people acquiesce in their own exploitation, subverting those concerned for social self-realisation from the collective pursuit of the 'basileia' into the frustrating futility of reforming society by personal dogoodery.

People must reject these false gods and this rejection is the only route to liberation through which to find a saving faith in what Jesus called 'the truth which makes you free'. This is the revolution inside Christianity in which progressive Christians are involved as part of their respnsibility in the destruction of the capitalist system, the promotion of the national liberation struggle, and the establishment of a climate in which the 'basileia' can be spelt out in a united non-racial democratic South Africa.

Progressive Christians struggling within the religious constituency recognise that religious leaders throughout history have claimed a hot line to God, which authorised them to control what people thought and did, thus ensuring the promotion of the church institutions and the impression of invaders with a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other is stamped from an historical mould. The Church has often promoted capitalist imperialism and authoritarian elitism, and the missionary work which opened up education in Africa often taught students to serve themselves instead of their people, becoming the building blocks of European empires. Many churches became religious transnationals under the protection of the State, extracting money, inculcating imperialist principles, spreading anti-communism as an act of faith, and promoting reformism. They paper over the cracks of oppressive society with an emphasis upon sin as a personal and never a structural problem, a private not a social conciousness, visions of heaven, an acquiescence with adversity and compliant submission to ruling powers, which are promoted as the priorities of the Christian life, and imply the acceptance of the status quo. But it is not Christianity.

> "Many of the ideological assumptions of the Christian church, on consideration, come from the predominant capitalist mode of production, and not from the Gospel of Jesus Christ." (Cde.Fr. Michael Lapsley.)

The Role of Progressive Christians

Against this progressive Christians strive, and have fought many issues including apartheid itself, racism in church, disarmament, chaplaincies, disinvestment, conscription and the use of church buildings and resources. The struggle continues to establish political mastery and rescue the ecclesiastical organisations from connivance with tyranny, establishing new structures in harmony with the liberation of the nation.

But progressive Christians also have a major duty in the battle of ideas. Negatively, this is to destroy any theological basis for apartheid, capitalism and imperialism and that victory is far advanced. More positively, modern theology has decimated the traditional approach to both deity and capitalism, and it becomes understandable that increasing numbers find little conflict between radical Christianity and Marxism. The creative vision which Jesus encapsulated in his vision of the 'basileia', the promulgations of Marx, and the pursuit of the struggle are formulations which arise out of the same human need and priorities, and seek a solution within the same conceptual framework of liberation. Like township jazz, they play their own tunes on different instruments, but the beat and the harmonies are the same.

> "One may even wonder whether the disciples of Karl Marx, who 1800 years after Jesus set in motion a similarly far-reaching and complex process with as yet quite unforeseeable consequences but similar aspirations to a radically different way, have not in fact the greatest right to regard themselves as the authentic perpetuators of Old Testament messianism and early Christian desires for radical change. Many Marxists, but also many self-critical modern theologians, are aware of the fact that concern for the future — that longing for liberation and radical change once found in Christianity — has been taken over in the modern period almost exclusively by Marxism." (Machovec 193)
>
> "When I give food to the poor they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist." (Dom Helder Camara)

This reflection or solidarity of Christians and Communists with one another may still be anathema to some, but is surely a sign of the real liberation surging through our country. The transcendent qualities of the human spirit are not limited to religious people, nor is commitment to the struggle limited to those rooted in political ideologies, and we all need their systematic facilitation, development and enjoyment. Freedom — real freedom — is coming.

Comradeship in the struggle

Jesus and Karl Marx would have got on like a house on fire, delighting in stripping away the aura and subterfuge which history had draped upon them. Dissimilar in some ways, their ideas, compassion, anger, and commitment would have meshed, and they would have built their relationship out of their unity, not their differences, becoming true comrades in the struggle. Both emphasised action. Jesus said those who *did God's* will would be fit for the kingdom (not just those who called him 'Lord Lord') and Marx that "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways — the point, however, is to *change* it". They were advocating involvement in the human struggle as the methodology of understanding it.

Us too.

We are not motivated by pious pontifications from pulpits, or the involved arguments of armchair ideologues but by tears and blood and hope in the struggle that exults against all odds. It is our common involvement in the liberation struggle in South Africa which is the great material and spiritual reality, and we unite there. The object is not to make conversions, not to establish dogmatic grounds for discrimination against believers or unbelievers, not to become involved in ideological wrangles about deity or the science of Marxism-Leninism, but to share our joint resources as we strive to liberate our people and ourselves.

Our philosophising and theologising does not originate in the library, but under the guns of the enemy. Comrades who have held their breath together whilst the SB searched, been pounded by the same cops to tell one another's secrets, breathed the same teargas, known the same loneliness of solitary cells or distant exile, mourned the same friends, sought to overthrow the same oppressive regime and replace it with a new government of the people, must enjoy this debate from the unity they know in the struggle, and not from the divisiveness that is imputed to them by the System. Cde. Fr. Barney Pityana writes:

> "Those committed to change in its liberating form, cannot be satisfied simply with analyses of the situation. They have to take affirmative action to alter the structural relations in society and to help usher in the era of freedom."

But when we are united in the battle, the sharing of understanding becomes an important resource for the pursuit of our quest, the mutual growth of the comrades, and the quality of the liberated society.

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Communists and Christians in the South African Revolution — 2

WE MUST JOIN HANDS AGAINST THE COMMON ENEMY

The following paper entitled "The South African Revolution — Christian and Communist Participation" was presented by Father Michael Lapsley S.S.M. to a seminar on the theme "Socialism and Religion" at the Anglican Cathedral Hall in Harare, Zimbabwe, on February 28, 1987:

Several years ago I was visiting a school I had once attended in New Zealand. I had been invited to address the school assembly about the situation in South Africa. Just before I entered the hall, one teacher grabbed my arm and asked me urgently, "Is there still time?" "Time for what?" I asked. "To save South Africa from the communists?"

This paper will address some of the issues involved in the participation in a common struggle by Christians and Communists but will not attempt to deal with the underlying theoretical and philosophical issues.

For seven years I lived in Lesotho after being forced to leave South Africa. I found that many of my fellow clergy seemed not to be bothered by injustice in Lesotho, or the greatest injustice which enveloped us — apartheid. They never spoke about it in their sermons or wrote about it in their church newspapers. In 1981, after returning from a meeting of Christian and Marxist revolutionaries from Africa and Latin America, I said in an interview that Christians and Marxists should be natural allies rather than enemies. A special edition of the Catholic newspaper was brought out to refute me, with long quotes from various popes. Some of my Marxist friends who were not Christians seemed to be almost as uneasy.

I deliberately chose to use the word "communist" in the title. Like most children brought up in a western country, I learnt that communists were bad people who persecuted all good, Christian people.

Living in South Africa almost brought me to the conclusion that the word "communist" was vacuous — devoid of all meaning. Why? Because the Pretoria regime uses the word "communist" to describe anyone who opposes their policy of racial domination and economic exploitation. It is a blanket way of trying to dismiss all opposition.

The South African Communist Party pointed out in 1962 that the Pretoria regime uses "anti-Communist prejudice as a cover to intimidate and suppress all democrats and anti-Nazis — whether they are Communists or not. Many opponents of apartheid are afraid of Communism — some out of ignorance, others because they enjoy special class or colour privileges themselves. Many people fall for this Nationalist trick. They do not see that freedom is indivisible; once they fail to defend the rights of all, even the Communists with whom they do not agree, they will end up by losing their own rights."

Wrong and Wicked

In the same statement, the South African Communist Party speaks from a standpoint of moral condemnation when it says: "It is wrong and wicked: that millions should slave in hunger and dirt so that a few should live in luxury and idleness; that good food should be destroyed while the people are starving; that nearly all the land should belong to a minority while ten million Africans have only 13% of the land; that our country should be ruled by a handful of capitalists and racialists who care nothing for the interests of the great majority of the people . . ."

In 1950 as a result of the Suppression of Communism Act, the Communist Party of South Africa was dissolved. A new underground Party emerged calling itself the South African Communist Party. Significantly, it was the African National Congress of South Africa with its strong Christian traditions which led the protest against the Suppression of Communism Act. The Day of Protest which was held on June 26 came to be celebrated thereafter as South African Freedom Day and has remained a symbol of the unity in struggle of Communists and non-Communists which has deepened over succeeding decades.

Personally I regret that state repression and state terrorism means that South African Communists, apart from the chairperson and general secretary, are not publicly identifiable. But my response is not to blame the Party. Rather it is to demand and to fight for the unbanning of all organisations presently banned in South Africa.

Of course we Christians must not forget that we have our own experience of being persecuted, of being driven underground in order to survive. Recently some Christian revolutionaries have joined their Communist compatriots, since the latest state of emergency was declared in South Africa, in rediscovering what it means to live an underground existence.

In the South African context, Christian-Marxist dialogue has not been the fruit of detached academic debate within universities and seminaries. It is the experience of a people who have fought in the same trench — together in a struggle to end national oppression and economic exploitation.

In 1956, 156 South Africans were put on trial in a marathon trial which ended in acquittal for all, some four and a half years later. One of the things which the State tried to prove was that the Freedom Charter, which contains the demands of the majority of South Africans for a new society, was a Communist document. Even a South African court was unable to prove that it was a Communist document. The 156 were very representative, including Christians and Communists, atheists and Moslems, Hindus and Jews.

It is within the ANC itself, the true parliament of South Africa, that Christians and Communists have found each other — a unity forged in struggle. Christian-Marxist dialogue has become fashionable in the last few years. Equally people speak of the need for inter-faith dialogue between the world's great religions and between different ideologies. In South Africa we have not felt it necessary to use such terms, but the rich history of our struggle has brought together Jews and Moslems, Christians and Communists, against South African Nazism.

At the Congress of the People in 1955, when the Freedom Charter was adopted, the ANC made its highest award, Isitwalandwe, to three people: Trevor Huddleston, Albert Lutuli and Yusuf Dadoo. A Christian priest later to become Archibishop, a lay-preacher who was President-General of the ANC and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, and a leader of the South African Indian community who became chairman of the South African Communist Party and was buried with Moslem rites (an interesting mix of Marxism and religion!).

It's interesting to look at the example of Helen Joseph, a veteran of the struggle. She has been listed under the Suppression of Communism Act for decades. She may not be quoted in South Africa. Every Sunday morning she participates in the mass at the Anglican Cathedral in Johannesburg. Not quite the image of the God-hating communist which we have all been led to believe in.

Then there was Bram Fischer — a South African Communist, who many people believe would have been State President of the Republic if he had stayed within the *volk*. He once said that one of the reasons he had joined the Communist Party was because it was at the time the only truly non-racial organisation within South Africa.

Human beings all made equal in the image and likeness of God — followers of Jesus — the Word who became Flesh and dwelt among us. Can we Christians not fail to be judged and indicted by those generations of South African Communists who practised what we preached but did not live?

Unforgettable Speech

In his unforgettable speech from the dock before being sentenced to life imprisonment, ANC leader Comrade Nelson Mandela said:

> "It is perhaps difficult for White South Africans, with an ingrained prejudice against communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept communists as their friends. But to us the reason is obvious. Theoretical differences amongst those fighting against oppression is a luxury we cannot afford at this stage. What is more, for many decades communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and their equals, who were prepared to eat with us, talk with us, live with us and work with us. They were the only political group who were prepared to work with Africans for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society.
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> "Because of this, there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with communism. They are supported in this belief by a legislature which brands all exponents of democratic government and African freedom as communists and bans many of them (who are not communists) under the Suppression of Communism Act. Although I have never been a member of the Communist Party, I myself have been named under this pernicious Act because of the role I played in the Defiance Campaign. I have also been banned and imprisoned under that Act . . ."

The Communist Party as a whole opposed apartheid long before the church thought of moving towards similar unequivocal opposition. Only in 1982 did South African Christians, at least some of them, begin to come to the conclusion that apartheid is a heresy, a false doctrine which must be fought against. Still in 1987, the statements of the church hierarchies inside South Africa are frequently ambivalent and contradictory. They condemn apartheid as evil. At the same time they continue to equate the violence of apartheid with the violence of self defence, the violence of those who live and die to be treated as human beings in the land of their birth. Some ecclesiastical pronouncements urge reconciliation while the majority thirst and struggle for justice. Christians are still being told by their leaders that it is morally legitimate to serve in the South African Defence Force and are not told that the South African state is morally illegitimate, is a tyranny which it is the duty of all Christians to seek to overthrow.

Christian leaders are often the most confused when it comes to the question of communism. Even the noble campaigner for the rights of all South Africans, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, consistently fell into the trap of equating apartheid as an evil with Nazism and Communism. A great irony after 20 million Soviet citizens laid down their lives to end the tyranny of Nazism and Fascism.

A Comparison

Fidel Castro in the book *Fidel and Religion* makes the comparison between Christian and Communist martyrs:

> "The Nazis murdered millions of people — including old people, women, and children in the Soviet Union, simply because they were citizens of a socialist country. And the Nazis weren't the only ones who killed communists in Europe. The capitalists' henchmen have tortured and killed communists, and left-wing men and women have been murdered in South Africa, South Korea, Vietnam, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Guatemala, El Salvador, the Sudan, Indonesia, and Cuba itself before the revolution — in dozens of countries, wherever in the past 150 years the ruling and exploiting classes feared they would lose their privileges, just as they murdered Christians in the early centuries of our era . . .
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> "I believe a comparison can be made between the persecution of religious ideas, that were also essentially the political ideas of the slaves, the oppressed in Rome, and the systematic, brutal persecution in modern times of those who are the bearers of political ideas — the workers and farmers embodied by the communists. If there was ever a name which the reactionaries hated more than 'communist', it was 'Christian' in another time."

Here in Southern Africa, South African communists, who were also dedicated members of the ANC, are among our most illustrious martyrs: Comrade Joe Gqabi, ANC chief representative, assassinated here in Zimbabwe; Ruth First, the recipient of a parcel bomb in Maputo; Mdu Guma, whose bedroom was rocketed in Matola in Mozambique, to name but three of the countless number who laid down their lives to bring freedom to others. As the SACP said on its 65th anniversary on July 30, 1986.

> "Our Party and individual communists have won their political place by dedication and sacrifice to the revolutionary cause in the actual arena of struggle. There is no phase of our struggle which does not have its communist heroes and martyrs, revolutionaries who watered the tree of freedom with their very blood."

We Christians can but salute and be humbled by the dedication, commitment and self-sacrifice of our communist sisters and brothers. For the South African state, communism is its concrete symbol of evil. As the new world acclaimed Kairos Document — the recent Theological Comment on the political crisis in South Africa — puts it, according to Pretoria "all evil is communistic and all communist or socialist ideas are atheistic and godless. Threats about hell-fire and eternal damnation are replaced by threats and warnings about the horrors of a tyrannical, totalitarian, atheistic and terrorist communist regime — a kind of hell-on-earth. This is a very convenient way of frightening some people into accepting any kind of domination and exploitation by a capitalist majority."

This kind of very crude propaganda led one South African soldier to be quoted in the South African *Sunday Times* in late 1975 to say that he had gone to Angola to "kill Cubans for Christ." To discover that some of the Cuban soldiers had Bibles in their back pockets was mind-blowing for the South African Defence Force.

For the majority of South Africans, communism is outside their experience. Their experience is with national oppression and capitalist exploitation. And it is a brutal experience.

Comrade Joe Slovo, the new General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, has observed that:

> "In South African conditions you don't have to be a doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist to believe that a liberation which deals only with a rearrangement of the voting system and leaves undisturbed the white race monopoly of 90% of our major productive resources, is no liberation at all. All you have to be is an honest black nationalist to understand that political domination has been the device to protect economic privilege and domination. This perhaps explains why, in our conditions, it has been such a short hop from black nationalism to communism for some of the greatest figures in our national movement . . ."

At the same time the party insists that the task now is to support the Freedom Charter which will provide a basis for a socialist future. Whether or not South Africa will set out on the road to socialism will depend on the correlation of class forces when state power changes hands.

At the Second Consultative Conference of the ANC, held in 1985, the Political Report presented by President Oliver Tambo drew attention to the fact that: ". . . our broad movement for national liberation contains both a nationalist and a socialist tendency. Our national democratic revolution has both class and national tasks which influence one another . . . The forces of counter-revolution continuously seek to separate these tendencies both politically and organisationally, set them at loggerheads and thus divide the national liberation movement."

I am not sure of how aware the SACP is that there are a growing number of South African Christians who are committed to the perspectives of the Party, who accept the Freedom Charter but who wish to see its perspectives deepen eventually into socialism and remain committed Christians.

What is the position of the Party towards them? Are they free to join the Party?

The Soviet Union

South African Christians who believe that apartheid is evil must acknowledge the fact that the greatest and most consistent ally which the ANC and those fighting for liberation in South Africa have is the Soviet Union. Even up to this last week, the greatest friends the racists have are the three Western powers which claim to subscribe to Christian values — the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Federal Republic of Germany. They are the ones who are telling us the problem is communism.

It's odd, isn't it, the amount of energy we Christians have devoted to fearing the effects of communism with scant regard for the deadly embrace which we have received from capitalism — our own AIDS — American Imperialism Down South — spread not by sex but through multi-nationals, the IMF, World Bank and the CIA.

Churches are fond of saying that the church is both a human and a divine institution. As a human institution, it frequently reflects and lives according to the rules of other capitalist institutions and it is deformed by materialistic values. Frequently it acts to defend its own institutional interests rather than those of the downtrodden.

Instead of asking whether it is possible for a Christian to be a communist, isn't it time that we began to ask whether it is possible for a Christian to be a capitalist. It is not original to observe that our objection to capitalism is based on its very nature as an economic system, which is committed to profit not people. In capitalism there are only idols, profits, national security states, accumulation, the arms industry and the spectre of nuclear holocaust. It's no accident that the FRG, Zionist Israel and the CIA have co-operated to give South Africa nuclear capability.

When we object to communism, it must be for not living up to what it professes, whereas the very nature of capitalism affronts human dignity and rights.

I think Frei Betto is right when he asserts in *Fidel and Religion* that ". . . the problem of atheism is not a problem of Marxism, it's a problem among us Christians. Atheism exists because we, the Christians, have historically been unable to give a coherent testimony of our faith. That's how it all began. When you analyse what the Church did by justifying exploitation on earth, in the name of a heavenly reward, you have the basis for atheism."

Still today, even when the Church correctly sides with the oppressed and attacks the apartheid state, it is often oblivious to itself as a site of struggle, blind to its own anti-democratic abuses of power and privilege, itself in desperate need of transformation.

However, I can but concur with Fr Hewlett Johnson, the "Red Dean" of Canterbury writing in 1939:

> "I wish to suggest that communism in its positive aspect is no fundamental enemy of religion, least of all of the Christian religion. In the long run, unless I am seriously mistaken, it will prove to be a true friend in at least one essential particular. It provides society with a new moral base, and is in process of achieving on the 'this-world' level those very things that we Christians have too often professed with our lips but denied in our lives."

Father Ernesto Cardenal, Minister of Culture in Nicaragua, asserts that communism is deeply Christian and the essence of Christianity.

Lenin himself says that "Communist society is a society in which all things — the land, the factories — are owned in common and the people work in common. That is communism." Not unlike the picture of the early Church painted in the Acts of the Apostles.

For some of us the dialogue is an internal one, in our own heads as we describe ourselves as having a Christian faith and a Marxist ideology.

For me, the South African communists I have had the privilege to know and discuss with have inspired me by their own vision, integrity and commitment to be more committed, to pray and struggle with Christians and Communists and with Communist Christians — all revolutionaries — to free South Africa and create a better world.

ANC Secretary General Alfred Nzo says: "Religious people and atheists must join hands against the common enemy. By their participation in the struggle, all these forces place themselves in a position to participate also in determining the future of our country."

Both Marxism and Christianity are at heart concerned with the liberation of the human community.

Our problem is apartheid.

Our problem is imperialism led by the United States.

Our problem is capitalist exploitation.

Our problem is not Communism.

INDABA FOR A QUIET CAPITALIST LIFE

By Phineas Malinga

White South African liberals, black South African reactionaries and Western imperialists are all intensely interested in one thing — the search for a "third force" in South Africa. They would like to get rid of the present government, but not if it means the victory of the liberation movement. Surely, they think, there must be some other alternative.

There have been many attempts to propose such alternatives, but none more serious and ambitious than the "KwaZulu Natal Indaba." A long series of meetings was held in the second half of 1986. It was lavishly publicised. It had the support of Inkatha and of the Progressive Federal Party. Members of Parliament and local councillors took part, together with numerous academics, businessmen and others. The documents produced by it run into hundreds. By far the most important, however, is the document dated 28 November, 1986, and entitled "Constitutional Proposals". This contains essentials of the solution which the Indaba is putting forward for the problems of South Africa. What sort of solution is it?

In answering this question, one meets an initial difficulty. The "Constitutional Proposals" are not proposals for a constitution of South Africa, but for a constitution of Natal. This does not mean that the authors envisage Natal seceding and becoming an independent country. On the contrary, the idea clearly is that there will be a federal South Africa. The document mentions the subjects which will be under the control of the central government. They are numerous and important, e.g. foreign affairs, defence, police, prisons, railways and airlines, minerals and energy, supervision of banking and insurance. But as to the way in which the central legislature and government will be constituted, whom they will represent and to whom they will be responsible, the document has not a word to say. It goes into that sort of detail only at what it calls the "regional" level — by which it means Natal.

Now, what is the point of devising a new constitution for one province of South Africa? Do the authors seriously believe that a province organised along the lines which they suggest could exist as part of a republic organised along present lines? If so, the worthlessness of their proposal is immediately apparent. It is by the government in Pretoria that the South African people are oppressed. The provincial administrations play a very minor role in the system and any new kind of provincial administration which could co-exist with the present central government could only represent a minor reform.

The organisers of the Indaba probably understand this well enough. The provincial ambit of their proposals was forced upon them in the first place by the provincial nature of their black collaborator, Inkatha. Given that starting point, they may as well make what use they can of the separatist sentiments which have always existed among elements of both the black and the white population of Natal. By producing an ostensibly provincial solution, they play on those sentiments and at the same time embarrass the government by forcing it to reject an apparently very modest proposal. The real game, however, is a different one. The Indaba proposals have been widely understood, and were surely intended to be understood, as putting forward principles applicable to the constitution of South Africa as a whole. Natal is a surrogate. For "Natal", the reader of the proposals is intended to substitute "South Africa". It is only on that basis that the proposals can be taken seriously and it is on that basis that they will now be examined.

Power Sharing

The proposed constitution is complicated. There is to be a legislature with two chambers. The first chamber has 100 members elected by the population as a whole, on a system of proportional representation. The second chamber has 50 members, ten representing each of the following groups:

the African background group
the Afrikaans background group
the Asian background group
the English background group
the South African group

It is immediately apparent that the population is being divided into groups which bear a close resemblance to the "racial" groups well known to the existing South African system. The word "background" is inserted in an attempt to prove that something different is in question — that the criterion is "cultural background", not "race". Such hair-splitting does not alter the fact that the white minority is being given twice as many seats in the second chamber as the African majority.

The "South African group" (known at an earlier stage of the discussions as the "general interest group") is meant to be a group to which anyone can voluntarily declare that he belongs. Those who do not wish to be classified in any of the other four categories will opt for the fifth. At first sight this may appear to be a pleasant concession to non-racism. In fact it would be a trap for progressives who, by joining the "South African group", would condemn themselves to have no more than one-fifth of the seats in the second chamber, and to be outvoted four to one by those who preferred to be classified racially.

To become law, a Bill would require a majority vote in both chambers. In the second chamber, however, there would be a further complication. Clause 5a (i) of the proposed constitution reads:

> "In the case of legislation which affects the religious, language, cultural or other rights of the members of a Background Group or the South African group, such legislation will require, in addition to majorities in both chambers, a majority of the representatives of that group in the second chamber."

In the event of a dispute as to whether a particular Bill does affect the rights of a group, the ultimate decision would be that of the Supreme Court. Its task would simply be to say "whether the Bill can reasonably be expected to affect the rights of the group concerned." If that question was answered in the affirmative, the group concerned would have a right of veto, no matter how urgently the interests of the majority might require the Bill in question to be passed.

Now, there are no prizes for guessing which groups would make the most use of this procedure. Any radical departure from the status quo in South Africa must inevitably affect the rights of the white minority. Suppose that there is a Bill to redistribute agricultural land. Could it be denied that this would affect the rights of Afrikaans-speaking whites? Well, then, the "Afrikaans background group" representatives in the second chamber could prevent the Bill from being passed.

Resolving Deadlocks

There is, admittedly, a procedure for resolving deadlocks between the first and second chambers. It is far from clear how this procedure would work in the case of a veto cast by the representatives of a particular "background group". The key element in that procedure is "a special committee consisting of an equal number of members of each chamber, proportionately elected by each chamber from its members." The composition of such a committee would appear to be most unpredictable; certainly there would be no guarantee that a party enjoying majority support among the voters would command a majority on the "special committee". Its existence, therefore, in no way answers the criticism that the will of the majority could be thwarted by the minority representatives in the second chamber.

We have examined one device for curbing the will of the majority, but there is also another. The constitutional proposals make provision for an "Executive", to consist of a Prime Minister and ten or more other ministers. The Prime Minister is to be the leader of the party which has an overall majority in the first chamber, or is to be elected by the first chamber if there is no party with an overall majority. So far, so good, but then clause 4(a) provides that

> "Half of the ministers shall be appointed by the Prime Minister from his party if it secured an overall majority and the other half shall be elected by an electoral college consisting of the elected members of all other parties represented in both chambers."

This seems an incredible proposition. The government is always to be divided against itself. Opposition parties, no matter how heavily defeated at the election, are to have the right to appoint half the government. The result, of course, would be a weak and ineffectual government at the political level. Civil servants would be left to conduct affairs very much as they saw fit. It would be impossible for the government to undertake any radical or important changes in the social and economic system.

Which is precisely the object of the exercise. We have here a classic example of a well-known imperialist ploy known as "power-sharing". The same sequence of events has been seen over and over again in various parts of the world. First, the imperialists foment antagonisms between different ethnic groups. Next, they announce that the antagonisms are irreconcilable and make majority rule impossible, because it would represent the dominance of the majority ethnic or religious group and the oppression of the minority. Finally, by way of a solution to the problem which they themselves have created, the imperialists produce some variation on the themes of partition and power-sharing. The story is that all the groups are to have their aspirations satisfied by being given a fair share of power. What the imperialists do not say, but very well know, is that power shared is power emasculated. If no political movement is allowed to have effective power, it follows that power remains with the allegedly non-political establishment — with the civil service, the armed forces and the managements of industry and commerce — and the status quo remains undisturbed.

A political movement which goes along with the idea of power-sharing makes an eloquent comment upon its own true opinion of its potential for winning popular support. If either Inkatha or the PFP saw itself as the majority party in a future South Africa, would it agree that the leader of the majority party should have the right to appoint only half the members of the government? It would not. The Indaba had a different majority party in mind. It was thinking of the ANC.

Power to the People

The idea of power-sharing stands in stark contrast to the ANC slogan of "Power to the people!" The ANC calls for power to be given to the people, not only because it believes in democracy as a principle, but also because it knows that there are difficult and important jobs which the people have got to do. The land has to be returned to those who till it. Manufacturing industry has to stop working for the benefit of the monopolies and start working for the benefit of the nation.

The distribution of food, clothing and housing, access to education, health care and transportation have to be changed, changed greatly and changed soon. These are tasks for a government with a programme and a united will of its own. It does not necessarily have to be an exclusively ANC government. Coalitions of progressive forces are quite possible. But they must be coalitions around a programme and around a set of agreed principles. Such coalitions have nothing in common with the sort of artificial, rudderless coalition that clause 4(a) of the Indaba constitution makes compulsory. The Indaba constitution has stagnation built into it. The ANC could agree only to a constitution which opened the way to dynamic change.

Private Property

The provisions on the composition of the legislature and the government are not the only indications that the basic aim of the Indaba is to preserve the social and economic status quo. Its Bill of Rights includes a classic anti-socialist provision under the heading "Right of property." It reads as follows:

> "1. Everyone has the right to lawfully own and occupy property anywhere in the province.
> 2. No one is to be deprived of his property without due process of law and expropriation may only be authorised in terms of a law if it is for the public benefit and if equitable and fair compensation is promptly paid.
> 3. Land and natural resources may not be expropriated except for the common good and in accordance with laws providing for equitable compensation."

Paragraph 1 is no doubt intended primarily to outlaw racial distinctions on the right to own property. That is fair enough, but it would have been wiser to aim accurately at the target with a clause saying "No one may be prevented on grounds of race from owning and occupying property anywhere in the Province." Instead, a form of words has been adopted which appears to confer an inalienable right to private property upon every individual. We have only to look at the history of the USA to see the sort of use which a reactionary Supreme Court can make of such provisions. Throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the American Supreme Court voluntarily struck down as unconstitutional even the mildest of legislation aimed at the redistribution of property. Although South Africa's judges have not been the most reactionary section of the government machinery, there is no reason to suppose that they are socialists or would in future be socialists if they continued to be appointed along traditional lines. In the hands of a Supreme Court with a bourgeois legal ideology, paragraph 1 could be a devastating weapon against even the most elementary forms of socialism.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 carry the matter further. They clearly prohibit nationalisation of industry and redistribution of land on any terms other than payments to the former owners of the full value of the property concerned, in cash. This prejudges a most important issue on which future South African governments should be free to take political decisions. To condemn this provision, one does not have to be an ultra-left dogmatist who insists on nationalising everything and paying not a cent in compensation. A people's government may choose to adopt quite a modest programme of nationalisation and may decide that in many cases it is right to pay compensation. These are, however, decisions for a people's government to make. To say that, for example, the gold mines cannot be nationalised without imposing upon the taxpayer the immense burden of paying out the full market value of the shareholdings of every South African and foreign capitalist with an interest in the gold mines is simply to perpetuate exploitation. It is to say that the more viciously a landowner or manufacturer has exploited his workforce in the past, the greater his claim upon the Treasury in future. A people's government operating under this rigid rule would be bound hand and foot in its approach to social and economic reform.

Neither is this the end of the matter. The words "if it is for the public benefit" in paragraph 2 and "except for the common good" in paragraph 3 may strike the casual reader as harmless enough. After all, surely the measures of nationalisation or redistribution undertaken by a people's government would be for the public benefit and the common good? The point is, however, who is to be the judge of the public benefit and the common good? The Bill of Rights included in the Indaba constitution, of which these provisions on private property form part, is clearly stated to be binding upon the executive and the legislature and enforceable by the Supreme Court. Therefore it would be the Supreme Court's view of the public benefit and the common good that would prevail. If a party were elected to the legislature with a clear mandate for redistribution of the land, but five judges took the view that such redistribution was not for the common good, that would be the end of the distribution programme.

Straightjacket for ANC

It is thus apparent that the Indaba constitution-makers are more concerned with stopping a future, non-racial South African government from doing certain things than with enabling it to do as much as possible. Why is this? It is partly a matter of basic political philosophy. In a capitalist country the absence of political action favours the capitalists. They have all sorts of ways of exercising their power without taking overtly political action. The whole machinery of government is designed to operate in the capitalist interest and will do so unless somebody takes hold of it and changes it. There are times (Nazi Germany, present-day South Africa) when the capitalists feel the need for vigorous repressive action to preserve their position, but their more normal posture is one of favouring political stagnation, so that the status quo can be quietly preserved. The Indaba proposals represent a hope that South African capitalism might be able to revert to this normal posture if an ostensible democratic system is introduced.

They also, however, have a more specific aim in view. They share the general awareness which exists today, everywhere in South Africa, from Union Buildings to the smallest shanty town, that the ANC would be the likeliest winner of a general election held on the basis of universal franchise. Their aim, then, is to stop a future ANC government from implementing its programme in full. The Indaba constitution is designed as a straightjacket for the ANC. It is a new variant on the "third force" concept. If there is no "third force" which can actually hope to beat the ANC in an election, then the task is to rig the system so that election victory will mean as little as possible and the defeated candidates of the "third force" will be able to salvage as much as possible from their defeat.

The proposals, then, are a compliment of sorts to the ANC. The liberation movement can draw encouragement from the fact that the enemy acknowledges that it enjoys majority support. Its task must now be to expose the Indaba scheme as a device to thwart the will of the majority. The people are entitled to send their representatives to a Parliament that can carry out the people's wishes, whatever they may be. The people are entitled to create a government that can do what needs to be done.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

AFRICA
NOTES & COMMENT

By Ahmed Azad

SUDAN: MAHDI UNDER PRESSURE

In April 1986, a year after the overthrow of the hated Nimeiry regime, Sudan went to the polls. During the one-year rule of the Transitional Military Council the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) had been instrumental in forging a broad alliance in defence of democracy, national independence and a progressive foreign policy (See *African Communist* No 103, 1985) which included the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

In the elections the Umma Party, drawing its support from the dominant Ansar (Islamic) sect, won 109 out of the 264 contested seats. The DUP won 75 seats and the National Islamic Front (a coalition of the fascist-like Muslim Brotherhood, other minor religious groups and remnants of the Nimeiry regime) gained 51 seats. The SCP won three seats and together with their closest allies have about 25 seats. There is no doubt that the Communists would have won more seats if elections had not been cancelled in major areas of Southern Sudan and if the electoral arrangements were more democratic. Under the present system the traditional sector — a reserve of the sectarian and semi-feudal forces — enjoys undue weight over the non-traditional sectors and the urban areas.

The Umma Party and the DUP formed a coalition government. For over a year Sadiq al-Mahdi, the Prime Minister, has vacillated between implementing the agreed policies and objectives of the "Charter of the Allied National Forces for National Salvation" and compromising with local regional and international reaction. The internal reactionary forces are composed of remnants of the old regime, conservative army officers, the higher echelons of the state bureaucracy and the parasitic capitalist strata.

This grouping is organised and led by the Muslim Brotherhood. In concert with US imperialism and reactionary Arab states they are trying to reverse the gains made since the overthrow of Nimeiry. To achieve this end they are prepared if necessary to impose a civilian-military dictatorship. The progressive and democratic forces have stepped up the campaign to protect the gains of the April 1985 uprising, liquidate the remnants of the old regime, ensure a just and equitable solution to the national question, deepen and extend the democratic process and free the country from economic dependence and crisis. Sooner or later Mahdi is going to have to choose whose side he is on.

The crucial battles to come will be fought on three main fronts 1) the economy, 2) Southern Sudan — the national question, 3) the democratic process.

Economy

There is a lack of basic commodities, combined with soaring prices and a deterioration of already run-down public services such as health and education. Many protests and demonstrations were organised to highlight the grave socio-economic situation, including a strike by butchers against a price hike on meat. Sudan's debt is estimated to be between 13 and 20 billion US dollars. Already Sudan owes the IMF 400 million US dollars. US imperialism, the IMF and the World Bank are pressurising Mahdi to impose draconian austerity measures which would place an intolerable burden on the workers, peasants and farmers.

At the moment Mahdi seems to be resisting the demand to reduce or eliminate subsidies on certain basic commodities, particularly at a time when the economy has been dealt a severe blow by drought and famine. But he has only taken mild measures to confiscate the ill-gotten wealth of the parasitic capitalist strata and the corrupt and highly dubious practices of local and foreign Islamic banks. The Sudanese government seems to have no clear policies on how to reduce dependence on US imperialism, curb rampant inflation, invigorate the manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

By contrast the SCP in its election programme proposed concrete measures to help resolve the economic crisis. They called for 1) the state to play a decisive role in building up food stocks, and to be solely responsible for "deals involving foreign commodity aid so that this does not become a tool for political blackmail"; 2) the liquidition of foreign capital and the placing of the banking system under the control of the Bank of Sudan; 3) the elimination of the influence of the IMF and other foreign credit institutions and the reform of the tax system so that the burden would cease to fall primarily on the shoulders of the toiling masses; 4) "the prices of basic commodities such as sugar, petroleum products, flour and medicines should be reduced and maintained at that level"; and 5) "steps should be taken towards broadening our international economic relations with non-aligned and socialist states. We should resume our commodity exchange and payment agreements with these countries."

Southern Sudan

The most intractable problem confronting the Sudanese government is the continuing war in the South. The Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by Joseph Garang is fighting, arms in hand, for a united, democratic, secular Sudan in which the legitimate interests and aspirations of the people in the South would be promoted. In mid-July last year, following negotiations between Garang and Mahdi, hopes were high that a negotiated settlement was on the cards. But Mahdi's prevarication on removing the Islamic Sharia law and meeting other conditions set by Garang, and the SPLA's destruction of a Sudanese aeroplane in which 60 passengers were killed in August 1986, dashed those hopes. Since then Mahdi seems to have hardened his position. This is illustrated in an interview that he gave to the magazine *New African* (April, 1987). Using the ill-conceived and potentially divisive attack on the Sudanese aeroplane, Mahdi indulged in a vitriolic attack on "Garang's movement" accusing it of being "divisive" and "an Ethiopian pawn". He asserted that his government would not negotiate until the SPLA "abandon terrorism and indicate that they are relatively free from Ethiopian manipulation." This is clearly an illusory and self-deceiving position. There is no doubt that in the South Garang is popular and that his movement cannot be crushed by military means.

The SCP and other left and democratic forces are persistently calling for a continuation of a dialogue in order to achieve a solution which would guarantee regional autonomy, equality and defence of national rights in a unitary Sudan. Such a solution would certainly help to extend the process of democratisation in the North. But this is not possible if Mahdi insists on imposing an Islamic constitution — with or without the Sharia laws — on 40 per cent of the population that is non-Moslem. Moreover such a move would strengthen the hands of the reactionary and chauvinist Muslim Brotherhood who are desperately seeking to be a third partner in the government.

Struggle for Democracy

Under the guise of defending the revolution and protecting the revolutionary process, the government has resorted to coercive measures to restrict and at times forcibly break up mass meetings, protests and demonstrations. The SCP is conducting a vigorous campaign for the abrogation of all laws and regulations which limit the democratic rights of the people.

The forces of reaction, including those within the army, are clamouring for the reconstitution of the discredited security organs. They seek to establish a state within a state, a body above the judiciary and legislature, which could be used to settle scores with the forces that inspired and led the popular uprising. The manoeuvres and conspiracies of local, regional and international reaction cannot be defeated by supine compromises and retreat.

The prospects of defending the revolutionary gains and extending their scope would be greatly enhanced if the government recognised in deeds the multifarious character of Sudan. The government needs to liquidate laws and regulations restricting the role and functions of trade unions and other mass actions, eliminate outdated electoral methods which give undue weight and influence to the traditional and semi-feudal strata, hold free and fair elections, punish those who acted as willing instruments of Nimeiry's repression and rehabilitate the victims of that repression.

Foreign Policy

The most marked change in Sudanese political life has been in the sphere of foreign policy. Under Mahdi Sudan has improved its relations with Libya, the national liberation movement in Africa and the Middle-east, Ethiopia and the Soviet Union. Mahdi paid a successful visit to the Soviet Union in August 1986. In February 1987 a delegation of the Supreme Soviet paid an official visit to the Sudan and in the same month a bilateral trade agreement between the two countries was signed. The three-year agreement could be worth 300 million US dollars. This agreement, the first since Nimeiry broke off relations in 1971, provides for Sudan to supply the Soviet Union with peanuts, cotton, sesame, sorghum and gum arabic and to import textiles, building materials and newsprint.

Improved relations with Ethiopia are hampered by pressure from US imperialism and Arab reaction. Revolutionary Ethiopia is a thorn in their side and they are still hatching plot after plot to overthrow the government of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Even now weapons of destruction from the imperialist world, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt and Morocco are transported to the counter-revolutionaries in Ethiopia and to the conflict in Chad. However the strength of anti-US popular sentiment and the internal balance of class forces in Sudan are formidable obstacles which the Reagan administration has to contend with.

In the fluid situation obtaining, the Sudanese people will continue their struggle to eradicate the vestiges of the previous regime, for economic independence, equitable regional and national relations, an anti-imperialist foreign policy and defending and deepening democracy. In a statement following the election results the SCP declares that whilst "the political activities of the masses outside the Parliament will still play the decisive role," the parliamentary activities of the democratic forces can play a useful auxiliary role. The SCP calls on the Sudanese people

> "and in particular, those forces which led the uprising against the dictatorial regime in March 1985, to continue their struggle and exert strong pressure to implement what has yet to be realised from the slogans and tasks of the uprising, and to develop the elections law towards a genuine representation of the political and class realities of the Sudanese society. In this respect the CPS would exert all possible efforts and work through the 'Democratic Alliance' inside the Parliament to overcome all the shortcomings that have overshadowed the Sudanese Parliamentary experience and prevented it from adhering to its national tasks."

SOMALIA: A REGIME IN TROUBLED WATERS

In November and December 1986 Mogadishu, the captial of Somalia, was rocked by time-bombs and gunfire. Early this year mass uprising erupted in major towns of Northern Somalia such as Hargesia, Burao, Berbera and Gabileh. These mass uprisings, spearheaded by the Somali National Movement (SNM), also included pitched military battles against the Somali army. The upshot was the defection of Lt. Omar Jama Elmi and 93 soldiers under his command to the SNM and the escape of 35 prisoners from the high security Mandeira state prison, many of whom also linked up with the SNM.

The Siyad Barre regime responded by declaring a dusk to dawn curfew in 5 regions, drastically reduced the flow of traffic between different regions, ordered the closure of shops and other commercial enterprises in some parts of the country, opened fire on demonstrators, killing and wounding a number of youth and students and in the most dastardly act executed 25 people.

In common with other revolutionary struggles throughout the world Somalia has its own martyrs and heroes who have paid the supreme price. Amongst them are Mohamoud Hassan Musse (Hurre) and Ibrahim Farah Dawareh (Gurey). Hurre, a member of the SNM central committee and commander of a military base in the eastern sector of the war front since 1982, died in a battle with the Somali army. Gurey, a young militant who participated in student demonstrations, was imprisoned and later fought with the guerillas under the command of Hurre.

Economy in Decline

Over the past decade Somalia's economy has become even more dependent on imperialism and Saudi Arabia. The state sector has been gradually dismantled and sold off to foreign companies and the local bourgeoisie. Food "aid" and onerous loan facilities from the USA and western Europe have led to the deterioration of agricultural production and the enrichment of the local parasitic capitalists who monopolise the black market. In line with the strictures of the IMF and the World Bank the Somali shilling has been devalued with catastrophic consequences and state subsidies drastically reduced on education, health, public transport, housing and basic consumer goods. Furthermore more than 25,000 workers in the state sector are expected to lose their jobs. The rapidly deteriorating socio-economic conditions, inflation, famine, drought and mass resentment especially in the North have exacerbated divisions within the ruling clique.

Clan Favouritism

A popular myth has it that Somalia is a homogeneous society free from the kind of ethnic and tribal divisions found in other parts of Africa. Somalia has a complex clan structure which Barre astutely exploited ever since taking power in 1969. Whilst favouring his own Marehan clan he also offered prominent positions in the political and military fields to persons from the other clans. To protect himself from a military coup he appointed Marehan officers to many of the most sensitive army command posts. Over the past 18 years members of Barre's family have accumulated a great deal of wealth. Not surprisingly when Barre was seriously injured in a car accident in May 1986 they felt extremely vulnerable, the more so as Barre who is a diabetic and a heavy smoker may not fully recover his health. At this point the ruling class was thrown into some disarray by internal bickering, jockeying for positions of power and the assertion by the Barre family of the primacy of the Marehan clan.

The in-fighting which ensued is clearly explained by Richard Greenfield in an article in *New Africa* (April 1987). Greenfield, a former political adviser to the government, is a perceptive observer of Somali politics. He points out that the Barre family which had become very rich would naturally prefer to keep the most important posts of President and Minister of Defence in their own hands. Highly influential in this coterie is Khadija, Barre's first wife. It seems that she was instrumental in Barre's leaving a hospital in Saudi Arabia prematurely. From May to September 1986 candidates who sought to lead the family put their stakes down. After a number of unseemly battles the Foreign Minister, Abdel Rahman Jama Barre — a half brother of the President — was chosen. However the fight is not yet over. Jama Barre still faces fierce competition from a number of closer relatives, not least Major General Hashi Ganni, a Vice-Minister in the government.

The Marehan Mafia seems to fear most Lt. Gen. Mohammed Ali Samatar, the new Prime Minister and still Minister of Defence. In the seventies when Somalia had chosen the path of socialist orientation it was widely accepted that Samatar was a revolutionary anti-imperialist patriot. By all accounts he has not used his position to accumulate vast riches. But when Somalia invaded Ethiopia in 1977/78 Samatar commanded the troops in the Hararghe province and seemed to support the chauvinist claims of Somalia over Ethiopian territory. The Barre family do not trust him and view him as a potential danger to their self-proclaimed right to rule.

Another leading non-Merehan figure is Brigadier General Ahmad Sulayman Abdullah. A son-in-law of Siyad Barre, he is at present Vice-Prime Minister in charge of the Ministry of Interior. He was formerly Head of the National Security Service and mainly responsible for the crackdown on progressive and Marxist-Leninist forces in the country. Whilst Samatar was known to be sympathetic to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, Abdullah has always been a supporter of close links and relations with Saudi Arabia.

In the present line up of contending forces there seems to be a temporary alliance between these two important non-Merehan figures to fend off the

Merehan wolves. Both sides however needed to invoke the support of Siyad Barre. Thus in September 1986 the Central Committee of the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party nominated him to be their candidate for the coming Presidential elections. This was confirmed by Congress in November and in December 1986 he was duly elected President.

Following the elections members of the Barre family sought to grab all the important posts in the government. But this was easier said than done. Samatar and Abdullah seem on the surface to have strengthened their positions. Out of 25 appointments to the rank of General, nine went to the Merehan clan and the rest to representatives of other clans.Given that Barre's health is in a parlous state, the scramble for the position of leader of the pack is reminiscent of the Mafia when the Godfather is perceived to be on the wane.

This unseemly scramble for power can only further strengthen the main opposition movements. The SNM and to a lesser extent the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) have intensified their military operations and scored some victories. The Somali People's Vanguard Party (SPVP) formed in February 1985 is consolidating its organisational, ideological and political unity. This party which adheres to the science of Marxism-Leninism consistently calls for the unity of the opposition and the formation of a broad based national front. Such a front in their view would adopt a unanimous programme and its main components would be the SNM and the SSDF.

CHAD: IS THE WAR COMING TO AN END?

For over 20 years a civil war has raged in Chad. Over the past five years France and the USA have directly intervened to bolster the rule of Hissen Habre. Habre's forces had captured the capital Ndjamena in 1982. But his writ did not run over large parts of the country. A variety of groups representing different regions, tribes and religions rejected Habre's claim to govern Chad. They were organised in the Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition (GUNT). The central role of the GUNT was recognised by the OAU and many progressive governments. One of its principal supporters has been Libya.

In 1983 when it seemed that the GUNT would score a decisive victory France intervened on the side of Habre. Chad was effectively divided on the 16th parallel, the GUNT controlling the north and Habre the south. For nearly five years a low intensity war ensued defeating the attempts of the OAU to bring about a negotiated settlement.

Towards the latter part of last year the war took a dramatic turn in favour of Habre. In his offensive Habre received the crucial support of France's interventionist army and a considerable supply of US military equipment and other financial help. For a few months the situation remained unclear as news came with bewildering speed about victories and defeats. But by early January 1987 it was becoming apparent that Habre's army was gaining ground. The media in the imperialist world used this as a pretext to indulge in anti-Libyan propaganda. Even now it is not possible to come to any conclusion regarding the scale of Libyan involvement and alleged losses.

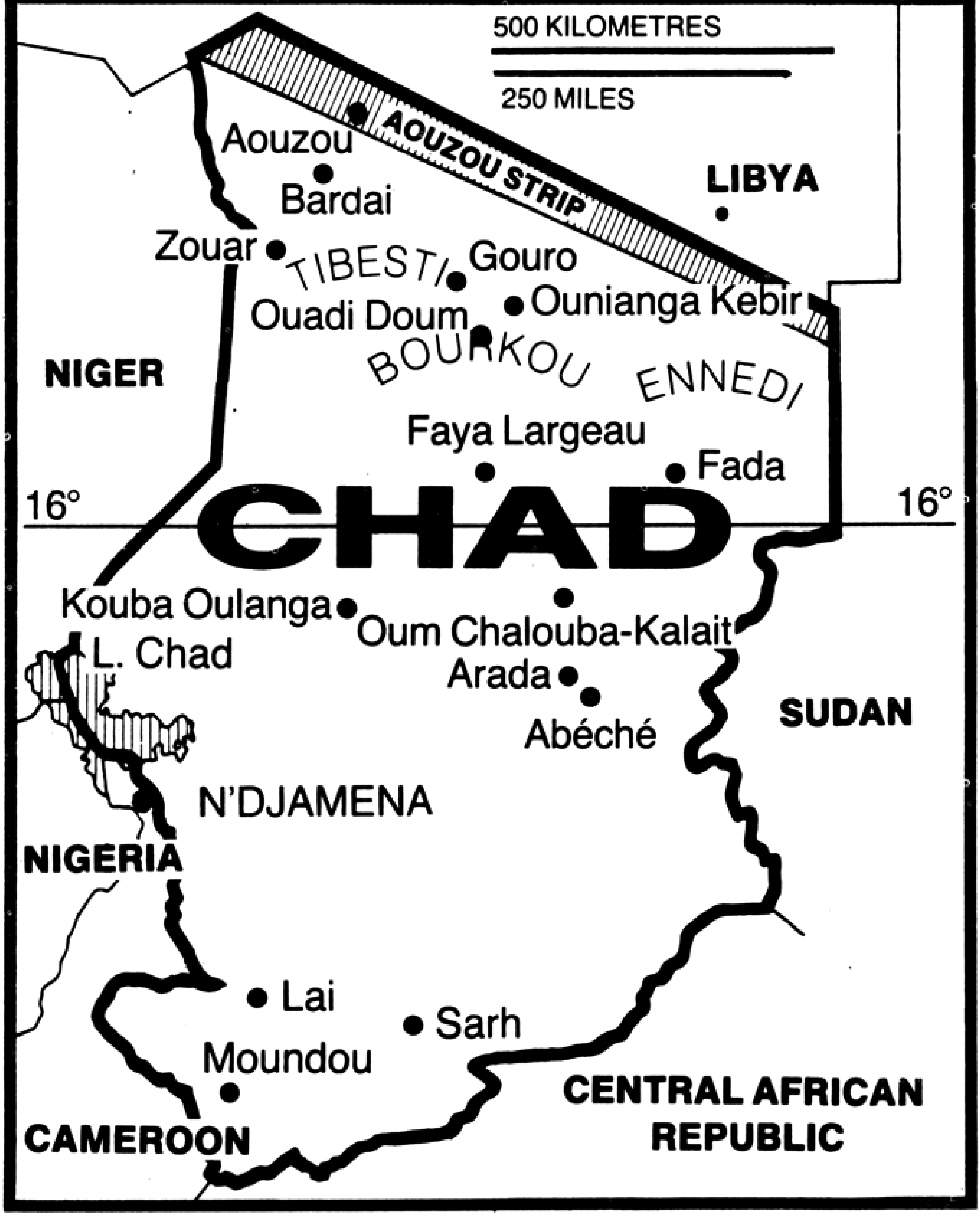
What is clear is that the events in Chad were used by Washington to orchestrate a virulent anti-Gadaffi campaign. Highly inflated figures of Libyan losses were trotted out as irrefutable facts. Differences between Goukouni Oueddi, the foremost leader of the GUNT, and Libya were distorted and over-dramatised in order to make them permanent. Let us recall that April 1987 marked the first anniversary of Reagan's terrorist attack on Libya. A year later US imperialism, speculating on the alleged defeat of Libya in Chad, sought to trigger off an anti-Gadaffi military coup. Whatever the extent, merits or demerits of Libyan involvement in Chad it is clear that Washington seeks to replace Gadaffi with its own right-wing client. Such a change would certainly promote the interests of imperialism and their local and regional allies in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, but not those of the Libyan people.

Splits in the GUNT

In August 1985 the GUNT made overtures to the Ndjamena regime and, according to press reports, criticised "Libyan interference in the internal affairs of the GUNT." This position was rejected by Achiek Ibn Omar, leader of the Revolutionary Democratic Council (CCDR) and a prominent official of the GUNT. These differences were further exacerbated when Omar and his army assumed control of the GUNT. But this takeover was rejected by Goukouni Oueddi — the deposed leader of the GUNT — and by Abdel Kader Wadel Kamougue. The latter leads an important group, the Forces Armees Tchadiennes (FAT), which has its base in the southern part of the country.

Oueddi and his army Forces Armees Popularies (FAP) have always been deeply entrenched in the TIBESTI mountains in the north and towns such as Zauar and Bardai. The FAP control and are thoroughly familiar with the terrain in the Tibesti mountains and surrounding areas.

CHAD'S BATTLEGROUNDS


500 KILOMETRES
250 MILES
AOUZOU STRIP
LIBYA
Aouzou
Bardai
Zouar
TIBESTI
Gouro
Ouadi Doum
Ounianga Kebir
BOURKOU
ENNEDI
NIGER
Faya Largeau
Fada
16°
CHAD
16°
Kouba Oulanga
Oum Chalouba-Kalait
L. Chad
Arada
Abéché
SUDAN
N'DJAMENA
NIGERIA
Lai
Sarh
Moundou
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
CAMEROON

The first serious turn of events in Habre's favour occurred when the CCDR routed the FAP in Fada in August 1986. Fada, which is situated just above the 16th parrallel, is an important strategic area. Thus the gulf separating the two sides was considerably, if not irreparably widened.

In October 1986 Oueddi called for negotiations with Habre. At that time claims were made that Oueddi had been shot and imprisoned by the Libyans — a claim which was hotly denied by Libya. The imperialist mass media however exploited the story to the full. Even when Oueddi appeared in Algeria some weeks later the speculations continued.

In December 1986 fierce fighting between the CCDR and the FAP took place in the Tibesti area and the two important towns Zouar and Bardai. The fighting between the two was exploited by France, USA and Habre. Already some months earlier US imperialism had been pressurising France to cross the 16th parrallel. Under pressure from the other two, France agreed to transport military supplies and equipment to the FAP forces. At the same time increased French air reconnaisance and US satellite pictures provided Habre with invaluable information. At this critical juncture the first consignment of US military aid, worth 15 million dollars, was poured in. Throughout the following weeks French and US military aircraft filled the airspace around the country. Daily 5 to 6 flights were made from Ndjamena to Kalait on the 16th parallel. Furthermore France increased its military contingent from 1,500 to more than 2,000 and strengthened its air capabilities.

By early January FAP had scored important victories in Zouar and battles were taking place in the Fada oasis. The strategic objective of France, the US and Habre was to gain control of Faya Largue and Ouadi Doum. In the latter Libya had built an air-strip with radar installations. Thus it seems that the CDR and their supporters including soldiers from the Islamic Pan-African Legion were caught in a pincer movement from the north and the south. There is only scanty information available about the existence and activities of the Islamic Pan-African Legion. They seem to consist of volunteers from different Moslem countries. The fighting made clear that without control of the Tibesti mountains it is quite impossible to defend Ouadi Doum and even Faya Largeau.

By the end of last year France had established a sophisticated air defence system on the 16th parallel. Included in this were fighter planes, missile batteries and radar stations. ON 7th January 1987 French fighter planes attacked Ouadi Doum and destroyed Libya's radar installations. Towards the end of January FAP and the Chadian National Armed Forces (FANT) had captured Zouar. For the next few weeks fierce battles raged over northern Chad. In February Kamouge returned to Ndjamena, thus implicitly recognising the authority of Habre. At this point the position of Oueddi was still unclear. Whilst he was making public statements favourable to Libya and denying that he had been under arrest in Libya his forces were now fighting side by side with the FRANT.

Towards the end of March this year Habre's army with the military, political, diplomatic and propaganda support of France and the USA overran Ouadi Doum. In so doing they captured a vast quantity of Libyan military equipment including fighter planes and tanks. Soon thereafter Faya Largue fell and Habre had established basic control over northern Chad except for the Aouzou Strip which is in Libya's hands. Sovereignty over this area — supposedly containing oil and uranium — is likely to lead to further conflicts. Libya's claims rest on the Franco-Italian deal of 1935 and the ceding of this territory to it by President Tombalbye in the 70's. An OAU commission under President Bongo of Gabon has tried in vain since 1977 to resolve this issue.

At the time of writing it seems that Oueddi was ready to recognise the authority of Habre. But negotiations between the two are tricky and difficult. It is reported that Oueddi rejects a one-party state and the integration of his movement and army into Habre's National Union of Independence and Revolution and his army. It is therefore very difficult to predict the outcome of these negotiations. Furthermore, over the past 20 years the deeply divided regions, ethnic groups and religions have produced a shifting sand type of alliance.

National Democratic Union (NDU)

An important component of the progressive and democratic forces in Chad is the NDU. The NDU was part of the GUNT and its General-Secretary Facho Balaam was at one time Foreign Minister of the GUNT. It adheres to the principles of scientific socialism and has the long term objective of building a secular, independent, socialist non-aligned Chad. At its first Congress held in August 1986 important decisions on political as well as organisational matters were taken. In the Party statutes it is stated that the Congress shall meet every three years. In between Congresses the Central Committee is the guiding organ. The Central Committee elects the General-Secretary, 9 Political Bureau members and a Secretariat of seven. The Political Bureau is expected to meet every 2 weeks and is the highest authority between meetings of the Central Committee.

At its Congress the NDU emphasised the importance of defending the unity of the GUNT. It pointed out that the unity of the GUNT was threatened by the failure to implement successive agreements. This was mainly due to the egoism of leaders of different tendencies, and regional, tribal and religious differences. The consequences of the disintegration of the GUNT show how correct they were. In the Congress they appealed to the people of Chad to work for national reconciliation on the basis of a minimum programme.

The NDU is a small but growing factor in Chadian political life. Under extremely difficult conditions it has preserved its own internal unity and conducted political and ideological work in different parts of the country. The road ahead will test even further its ideological staunchness and political mettle. The NDU has chosen an honourable but exceptionally difficult road. It needs the solidarity of progressive and democratic forces.

The war in Chad demonstrates how an internal conflict with sharp ethnic, regional and religious contradictions can be internationalised by imperialism. In addition to the 15 million dollars' worth of military equipment already given, US imperialism has earmarked another 10 million dollars of military aid. Moreover reports strongly indicate that Habre has given the USA permission to operate military bases in Chad. This is a dangerous escalation of the conflict and a threat to the independence of Chad's neighbours. Given that France has already supplied Habre with 40 million dollars of military assistance it is clear that the imperialist powers are seeking to suck Chad into their military plans and conspiracies.

ALGERIA: SLIDE TO THE RIGHT

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the independence of Algeria. The heroic armed struggle of the people of Algeria led by the FLN continues to inspire the oppressed and exploited masses of our country. Since independence the bonds that tie our peoples together have been strengthened by the consistent and unstinting political, diplomatic and material support given to the ANC by the FLN and the people of Algeria. We shall always remember that the first Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto We Sizwe, Nelson Mandela, received his military training in Algeria. It is therefore painful to note that in the year of its 25th anniversary the atmosphere in Algeria is charged with doubt and uncertainty.

Over the past few years the state sector in industry and agriculture has come under fierce attack. In the name of liberalisation attempts are made to place the state industrial complexes in the hands of private local and foreign capital. The biggest beneficiaries would be the multi-national companies.

For some years the fraternal Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria (PAGS) has warned that the attacks on the state sector represent a shift to the right. The Algerian communists are convinced that the state sector constitutes the foundation for economic independence, development and social progress. They have persistently pointed out that the bureaucratic and comprador bourgeoisie in their own selfish interests are prepared to transform a proud, independent, progressive and non-aligned country into a pawn of the imperialists and the multi-nationals.

The policy of austerity pursued by the present government has led to a drop in the purchasing power of the workers, to unemployment and cut-backs in education, health care, maternity leave and housing. The fabulous wealth generated by the boom in oil prices in the early eighties was squandered. It could have been used for productive investments and for reducing the dreaded debt repayment of 19 billion US dollars. 75% of Algeria's revenue is used to service this debt.

The aggravation of the economic, social and political situation led to mass demonstrations by students and workers in different parts of the country. In Constantine, Setif, the Casbah of Algiers, Oran, Tizi, Saida, Blida and other areas there were clashes between demonstrators and police in which a number of demonstrators lost their lives. Many others including well-known intellectuals were injured, arrested or sent into internal exile. These coercive measures gave rise to an unprecedented campaign of protest and solidarity with those arrested or exiled. Demands were raised for greater democracy and the abrogation of articles 120 and 121 of the FLN's internal rules which prohibit non-FLN members from holding responsible positions in the trade union, youth and other mass organisations.

By March 1987 the mass solidarity movement had secured the release of the detainees and the exiles. On April 23rd President Chadli ordered the release of 186 persons who had been sentenced to different terms of inprisonment for their part in the demonstrations. The President also legalised the existence of A League of Human Rights led by a lawyer Brahimi. But the threat of further repression and arrests, particularly of communists and suspected communist sympathisers, is ever present. Right-wing circles are busy fanning an anti-communist campaign in which "communist agitators" are blamed for the mass demonstrations and the subsequent solidarity movement.

The communists supported the demonstrations of students, workers and school pupils. They have proposed a platform of action to workers, peasants, cadres of the state and economy, youth, women, small traders, artisans, and civil and military patriots in order to unite and mobilise the majority of Algerians. The main points of the platform are calls for: the strengthening of the state sector, defence of living and working conditions of the masses, extension of democratic rights and freedom, improvement of social services and a consistent anti-imperialist foreign policy. For unity in action to be effective it is not necessary, the PAGS points out, for groups or individuals to agree with the platform as a whole. They declare, "Yes for unity in action with whoever acts against imperialism and reaction even on only one point of this platform."

The right wing groups are seeking to reverse the non-aligned foreign policy pursued by Algeria since independence. For 25 years Algeria has remained, by and large, faithful to the policy of non-alignment and has consistently supported the PLO, ANC and Polisario.

The future battles between those who seek to tie Algeria even closer to the purse strings of imperialism and those who want Algeria to be revolutionary anti-imperialist country will be fiercely contested.

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The international revolutionary movement of the proletariat does not and cannot develop evenly and in identical forms in different countries. The full and all-round utilisation of every opportunity in every field of activity comes only as the result of the class struggle of the workers in the various countries. Every country contributes its own valuable and specific features to the common stream.

Lenin, *Inflammable Material in World Politics,* 1908

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THE KEY TO SOCIAL PROGRESS LIES IN THE PARTY

— Fidel Castro

Extracts from speech to close the deferred session of the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba at which the first programme of the Party was adopted, December 1986.

There is a fundamental issue, and it's that we have a Party. That is very clear, that we have a Party. It's so important to have a Party!

Today is the 30th anniversary of the **Granma** landing. Some years before that, when we started the revolutionary armed struggle we didn't have a Party. We had a small contingent of men, there was a political organization and we had clear ideas, but we started the struggle with just the embryo of a Party. At the time of the **Granma** landing there was a movement and we eventually had a large movement, but not what could properly be called a Party, in the true sense of the word.

At the beginning of the revolution we had the Rebel Army, which as Raul recalled today I had described as a "unifying factor for all the people."

We all know how the Party, this new Party, the Communist Party of Cuba, was created, how it was built up, how unity among the various revolutionary forces emerged, how it evolved, overcoming difficult obstacles, errors even, like those that surfaced initially and were analyzed, discussed and overcome in due time; how it was built up slowly and carefully, selecting the best workers in the country, the best fighters. We were just a handful in the first years of the Revolution.

The Party devoted a great deal of time to its own creation, its own development, its own growth, its own internal affairs, its own ideological training. It was also being built, gaining experience, in its active participation in these almost 28 years of selfless and heroic revolutionary struggle.

Of course, right from the time the Party was founded it was present in everything, but it still had a modest educational level. It had a great patriotic consciousness, a great revolutionary spirit, but not a great political education — although our members, from the very moment we started moving down the path of socialism, had what could be called a revolutionary consciousness. They knew what they wanted, despite the fact that they were not equipped with many ideas or knowledge. That was the task of ideological education, the work of the revolutionary schools, the work of our press, the work of our mass media, which simultaneously educated the Party and the people.

It's really very gratifying and encouraging to see that today we have a Party with a large number of members with experience, a high educational level, a broad political education, a political awareness and a high revolutionary consciousness, a Party that knows what it wants and is really learning how to achieve what it wants. This emanates very clearly from what we have seen in these days.

The Party now has more than half a million members and candidate members. Half a million! Imagine, half a million! How can we compare that figure to what we had during the days of the attack on the Moncada Garrison? We were just a few hundred comrades and we already thought we could carry out a programme, make a revolution, bring the revolution to power, overturn the dictatorship and carry out a revolutionary programme. There are now about 3500 Communist Party members for every one of those who took part in the Moncada attack — 3500! Plus another 3500 Young Communists and in addition millions of workers, Committees for the Defence of the Revolution members, women, peasants, students. It is really a colossal force.

At that time we didn't even have a modest radio station to spread our ideas. Maybe we would have had it after taking over the garrison; we surely would have had it, because it was planned. There was no newspaper. Today we have modern mass media, scores of publications, several important national newspapers, provincial newspapers, magazines of all kinds, powerful television channels and radio stations, the whole educational system in the country, all the resources to spread ideas. It's so important to spread ideas! We saw very clearly that if we could not spread ideas and if the masses did not adopt those ideas the struggle was impossible, victory was impossible. We always saw that the masses were the basic factor in the revolutionary struggle, the great force that makes history, and that if the masses were exposed to those ideas nothing could stop our victory.

So what did we have at the time of that first program and what do we have today? Immense, tremendous, extraordinary resources and half a million Communists! At that time there was maybe one of us for every 50 000 citizens; now there is a Communist for every 20 citizens, including newborn babies. Today there is a Young Communist League member for every six or seven young people, depending on the ages as a point of reference, and the masses are members of our trade unions, our Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, all our mass organizations, under the Party's leadership. Under the Party's leadership! They are not under the leadership of the state; they are under the leadership of the Party, because the Leninist idea of the role of the Party in a revolutionary process is becoming clearer and clearer.

That's what having half a million Party members means. And as I said during the sessions, it's a healthy Party, a very healthy Party, even though some members have made mistakes, a Party with a high morality, a Party of honest people. There may be a dishonest Party member unworthy of membership in our ranks that we haven't yet discovered, but the Party, its members and its cadres are very moral and humane.

It was starting to go to pot, but we have reacted in time so that the Party members will not be corrupted, the Party will not be corrupted, the people will not be corrupted, the young people will not be corrupted and above all our working class will not be corrupted. (APPLAUSE) I'm not falling into wishful thinking: I'm expressing what we have been seeing in this rectification process. . .

Our Party has explained with great frankness and courage the errors it has committed and how it happened; how at a given time we made errors along the lines of being extremist, so to speak, or being idealistic. And then we began to make worse mistakes, much worse, with more negative consequences, for the first kind were reversible but the kind of errors I've been referring to could have reached the point of being irreversible. We had to rectify them in time, not only for the sake of our own process but also for the revolutionary process in general, since the construction of a new society, the construction of socialism, the road to communism is completely new to humanity; it's a new experience, a very recent one that must constantly be enriched by both theory and practice.

No one can imagine that it's all said and done, that all the problems were solved 150, 160 or more years ago, when the *Communist Manifesto* or the Gotha Program were made known, or Marx' and Engels' books or Lenin's later on. It would be antidialectical to think that, it would be anti-Marxist to think that.

Humanity and society follow their course, and more and more problems crop up. There are problems in this day and age that didn't exist then. At that time, for example, it seemed as though natural resources were unlimited, infinite, and that it was the social regime only that was the obstacle to the unlimited development of the productive forces and social, especially material wealth.

Of course, there is a lot of truth in the great faith the founders of scientific socialism had in the possibilities of science and in the possibilities for development of the productive forces through the application of science. They realized that over 150 years ago and now the socialist countries are beginning to see it very clearly. In the socialist countries there is a lot of activity surrounding the issue of scientific and technical development, for this is an indispensable prerequisite of the development of the productive forces.

Nowadays there are new problems, pollution for example, which is a reality and an enormous problem. There has also been an incredible amount of waste of non-renewable natural resources, oil for example.

It is possible that in the brief span of 150 years man may exhaust all the hydrocarbons that accumulated over hundreds of millions of years.

A proven fact is that throughout its history, humanity has engaged in all kinds of insane, abusive, unjust, cruel acts and wars; and this is especially true of man raised in the selfishness of class society. That is a fact proven over and over again. Man has unleashed world wars that have meant tens of millions of deaths; right now he is on the threshold of a war that may mean the end of all living creatures.

Man has also committed all sorts of outrages with natural resources — apart from the fact that they are unequally distributed, for Nature gave some many riches in the soil, hydrocarbons and minerals, and others got practically nothing in the historical partition of the planet. Moreover, terrible situations of poverty and underdevelopment were created; we know about them from our ties with the Third World; we have thought about them, it's what we see in entire regions where thousands of millions of people live whose future is yet to be decided.

There are new problems, I repeat, enormous problems in this day and age, and it's up to the revolutionary, progressive parties and Marxist-Leninist theory to pinpoint, elucidate and solve them. Some ideas have to be enriched by interpreting Marxism-Leninism correctly. All this is closely related to the construction of socialism.

We should point out that Lenin made a great contribution when he conceived of the possibility of building socialism in an economically backward country, in a country that wasn't an industrial power — the old empire of the czars. There was a time in revolutionary thinking when it was felt that revolution was only possible if it first occurred in the most industrialized countries, and, what's more, in several industrialized countries at the same time. One of Lenin's great historical merits was to have thought of the possibility that socialism could be built even in an industrially backward country.

Of course, the construction of the first socialist state in such conditions took its toll in enormous, terrible sacrifice; in isolation and a blockade; in the need to develop and reinvent science and technology. It meant building a socialist regime with just its own resources, the lone resources of an industrially backward country which, moreover, was in ruins. This was a historical feat, one of humanity's greatest ever, although the consequences are still felt to some extent.

After that, socialism continued to develop. Socialist processes were victorious in other industrially backward countries in Europe and later on in the Third World. Of course, by then a Marxist-Leninist idea of tremendous scope was being practised: internationalism. It was internationalism that made possible the phenomenon of a socialist revolution 90 miles away from the most industrialized and powerful imperialist country in the world.

In Marx' times imperialism didn't even exist. Imperialism is a new phenomenon which Lenin researched and analyzed to guide the revolutionary struggle under the new conditions. And this is what it's all about, we have many new problems to solve and many obstacles to overcome because this experience is very new and socialism is being built on a trial and error basis, so to speak. Yet some concepts are very important.

I believe that one of the worst things that happened to us here — I've said this before and perhaps I'll say it again more than once — is that we began to go off course: perhaps others have done it too, but I've seen the example of what was happening to us: the blind belief — or it began to be blind — that the construction of socialism is basically a question of mechanisms. I think that the construction of socialism and communism is essentially a political task and a revolutionary task, it must be fundamentally the fruit of the development of an awareness and educating people for socialism and communism. (APPLAUSE)

This does not deny the usefulness and value of certain mechanisms, even economic mechanisms, yes, economic mechanisms! But to me it's clear that economic mechanisms are an instrument of political work, of revolutionary work, an auxiliary instrument. I dare say that economic mechanisms are auxiliary means, auxiliary instruments of political and revolutionary work but not the fundamental way of building socialism and communism. I haven't the slightest doubt that the fundamental way is through political and revolutionary work. . .

When there's no competition, if the motivation prompting the owner in a capitalist society to defend his personal interests is out of the question, what is there to substitute for this? Only the cadres', individual people's sense of responsibility, not just the collective's sense of responsibility, the role played by the cadres. The man who is in charge there must be a Communist. It is unquestionable that being a member of the Party, or not being one, the man who is in charge there must be a responsible man, must truly be a Communist, a Communist! A revolutionary. (APPLAUSE) And not a Communist playing at capitalism, a Communist dressed up as a capitalist or, mark you, a capitalist dressed up as a Communist. (APPLAUSE). . .

Communists must be formed from the time they are Pioneers, from the time they are in day-care centres, to put it plainly. And the socialist state has everything: day-care centres, education, all levels of education, all the way through the university. Can this be done or not? Practical experience has shown we can, and I've seen many cases of correct political work. Political work isn't reciting a catechism about Marx and Lenin to people very day, but rather being able to awaken human motivation and morality. (APPLAUSE)

To put it graphically, comrades, we must look for the hidden seed that exists in every human being, to coin a phrase from the documentary called "The Hidden Seed", because every person has it. There can also be a hidden bad seed and if we start cultivating bad seeds we can create monsters.

I don't think anybody was born revolutionary or not. It depends on how you develop the positive traits in every human being. I have seen criminals who are very ashamed to have people know that they are such. Pride is one of the hidden seeds in human beings, almost without exception. We must learn how to develop that pride of all human beings, their honour, their dignity, the finest traits people have. This is clear, in my view. . .

We can safely say that we have achieved our best results working with the pride and honour of people, with their consciousness and instilling ideas. I have mentioned some of the fields in which these mechanisms could not be used, although on the other hand I do feel they are necessary in material production. There are research centres where people work 14 or 15 hours a day and think nothing of it. I'm not advocating that people work 14 or 15 hours a day; I'm simply explaining what the pride and honour of people can do.

We must appeal to people's consciousness, and the other mechanisms, the economic factors, are means or auxiliary tools for political and revolutionary work required by a genuine Revolution and, especially, required for the construction of socialism and the path to communism.

The same can be said for Party members and cadres of the mass organizations. The best things we have, to tell the truth, have been obtained with political and revolutionary work, through the devélopment of consciousness. These are not illusions, they are examples which are clear to all. And I say realistically, because we must be realistic, that we must use these economic mechanisms in material production, but with this concept: as an auxiliary means or instrument of political and revolutionary work; because believing that these methods will give us the miracle of efficiency and economic and social development, the miracle of socialist construction is one of the most ridiculous illusions there could ever be. (APPLAUSE)

That's where the Party's work comes in, that's what became clear, that's what's reflected in the summaries of the municipal and provincial plenums which have been held and the analyses which comrades have presented. In other words we have a strong Party and the Party has come to grips with the country's problems more than ever before, which is very important. Now it is dealing with many problems it never tackled for years. Now the Party is in the centre and vanguard of this battle to rectify errors and combat negative tendencies. . .

It is clear that the solution to the problems of efficiency, development and the construction of socialism is in the hands of the Party. That was very clear! And as I said yesterday, not by managing, not trying to manage but simply by training, guiding and leading men and women; coming to grips with all negative tendencies and errors of any kind; setting an example. That was an issue which was much talked about, the exemplary conduct which a Communist Party member must have. Yes, yes, there's no other way, or otherwise he or she can't be a Communist Party member, can't have that distinguished title. (APPLAUSE)

You know very well that being a Communist means sacrifices; you know it better than anyone else. Sacrifices and efforts are always being demanded of you more than of anybody else. This is logical under any circumstances and could not be otherwise; it must be that way.

There are citizens, workers with fine traits who have been honest enough to say, "No, I don't want to join the Party," because they don't want to take on the obligations which Party membership implies. This is the first thing we must make Party members understand, that they must be ready for anything, be dedicated and self-sacrificing and assume a greater share of duties and responsibilities than any other citizens. That is why exemplary conduct is required.

It is not a question today of tackling problems of illiteracy, a lack of schools, the problems of beggars, starvation. It is not a question of tackling the problems of men and women dying for lack of hospitals, doctors' assistance of any kind. It is not a question of tackling the problems of a bloody dictatorship that oppressed us and tied our hands and feet, that deprived us of freedom, deprived us of bread, sold us out to foreigners. It is not a question of struggling almost without arms, without everything, against a powerful and well-armed enemy, in the face of huge tasks.

It is a question of solving and confronting new problems stemming from our progress, our development and the great historical challenges of developing the country, building socialism, advancing along the road to communism, developing revolutionary theory and practice, demonstrating that socialism is not just overwhelmingly superior to capitalism in the fields of education, health care or sports, or other things where they admit we have shown progress, but also demonstrating to the capitalists what we socialists, we Communists are capable of doing with pride, honour, principles and consciousness; that we are not once, not twice, but ten times more capable than they of solving the problems posed by the development of a country! It is a question of demonstrating that we are more capable than they are of being efficient in material production! (APPLAUSE) It is a question of demonstrating that a consciousness, a communist spirit, a revolutionary will and vocation were, are and will always be a thousand times more powerful than money!

Patria o Muerte!
Venceremos!
(OVATION)

A TRIBUTE TO DAVID IVON JONES

A PAGE IN REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

By C. Andreyev

The Novodevichi Cemetery is situated near the Moscow River across the Lenin Hills, next to the ancient monastery of the same name, meaning "New Virgin".

The cemetery is the final resting place of many prominent Russian personalities — writers, scientists, artists, actors and composers. Among them are Anton Chekhov, Stanislavsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, to name but a few. After 1917, heroes of the October revolution, of socialist reconstruction and the Great Patriotic War, as well as Soviet politicians and statesmen, writers, artists, composers, poets of international renown were buried here.

Among the monuments are tombs of outstanding leaders of the world communist movement, including such prominent South African revolutionaries as J.B. Marks and Moses Kotane. One can wander around for hours on end, a witness to the silent history of the past.

Recently, due to the persistent efforts of Soviet comrades, a new page was opened in the glorious history of the South African Communist Party and the South African revolutionary movement. The tomb of David Ivon Jones, one of the founders of the CPSA, was discovered after several years of research. This is therefore an appropriate occasion briefly to recall his short but meaningful life and achievements.

David Ivon Jones was a Welshman born into a worker's family. He was at first an odd-job man, travelled as far as New Zealand, then moved on to South Africa in 1906. While working in the mines he became active in the trade unions and became a well-known organiser. In 1914 he was elected Secretary General of the Labour Party and a year later, together with W.H. (Bill) Andrews, founded the International Socialist League.

When the Communist International was formed, Jones urged that the South African Communists should affiliate to it. In May, 1921 he attended the Third Congress of the Comintern in Moscow as a delegate from the CPSA and remained there because of ill health. He dedicated himself to the problems of the tactics and strategy of the international working class movement. He wrote many articles on these questions and enjoyed the respect and popularity of his fellow revolutionaries.

Jones died in Yalta on the Black Sea coast after suffering for several years from tuberculosis — the disease of so many revolutionaries. He was buried in the Novodevichi cemetery on June 14, 1924, after a moving and well-attended ceremony which was described in Pravda.

In his political will, written in Russian, he asked the "South African Party to keep in step with the Russian Bolshevik Party and pursue with revolutionary dedication and dignity the great historic mission which is laid by history . . . on South Africa, especially in respect of shaking the basis of world capitalism." (Translated from the Russian).

His contribution is described in A.B. Davidson's book *South Africa: The Birth of Protest, 1870-1924* (Moscow, 1972). Professor Davidson is a prominent Soviet African scholar.

For more than fifty years his grave lay in a quiet corner near the walls of the convent in the shadow of a poplar tree that grew to become tall and strong. Snow covered an austere tombstone of cement, with a star and hammer and sickle in the centre and a simple inscription: his name and the dates of his birth and death.

Yellow leaves would fall and be swept away by the winds . . . Those who knew him died and for some time the grave was unattended, but not forgotten, for he was never relegated to the past.

The plaque may have faded with time but not his memory. The red star is now brighter than ever. His work goes on and hope still lives, now stronger then ever.

On Hero's Day, December 16, 1985, South African and other students as well as members of the Soviet public and Communist Party officials, came to honour Ivon among the other SACP leaders and to praise him. Red carnations were placed on the white snow under which he sleeps. From now on they will be there forever.

DOCUMENTS

THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN THE SOVIET UNION

In the course of his January 27 report to the CPSU Central Committee on behalf of the Political Bureau, comrade Mikhail Gorbachov made the following comments on the state of relations between the various nationalities in the Soviet Union:

Comrades, there is not a single fundamental issue that we could resolve, now or in the past, without taking into account the fact that we live in a multi-ethnic country.

There is hardly any need to prove the importance of socialist principles in the development of relations between the nationalities.

It is socialism that did away with national oppression and inequality and any infringement on the rights of people on grounds of nationality, and socialism that ensured the economic and cultural progress of all nations and nationalities. In short, the successes of our party's nationalities policy are beyond any doubt, and we can rightly take pride in them.

But we must also see the real picture of relations between the nationalities and the prospects for their development. Now that democracy and self-government are growing more extensive, now that there is a fast growth of the national awareness of all nations and nationalities, and processes of internationalisation are growing deeper, it is especially important to settle, quickly and fairly, questions arising on the one possible basis — in the interests of the progress of each nation and nationality, in the interests of their drawing closer together in future, in the interests of society as a whole.

And in this connection it must be said that negative phenomena and deformations which we have been combatting have also shown themselves in the sphere of relations between nationalities. Now and then there have been manifestations of parochialism, tendencies towards ethnic isolation, sentiments of ethnic arrogance and even incidents similar to those which took place quite recently in Alma-Ata.

The events in Alma-Ata and what had preceded them call for a serious analysis, for a principled assessment. All this is yet to be thoroughly examined. But it is clear already today: what has happened should compel not only communists in Kazakhstan, but all party organisations and their committees as well, to face up to the problems of the further development of national relations, of enhancing internationalist education. It is especially important to save the rising generation from the demoralising effect of nationalism.

Lenin taught "to be able to be an internationalist in deed", and it is our duty not to interrupt this study.

All of our experience shows: nationalist trends can be successfully opposed only by consistent, sustained internationalism. Everything that we have accomplished is thanks to concerted effort. If one region produces oil, another one provides it with bread. Those who grow cotton receive machines.

Each ton of bread, each gramme of gold, each ton of cotton, coal and oil, and each machine — from the simplest to the most sophisticated — contains a particle of labour of all Soviet people, of the entire country, of our whole multinational union.

The entire atmosphere of our life and concerted work, the family and school, the army, culture, literature and arts are called upon to shape and inculcate in Soviet people of all nationalities, above all the youth, the noblest feelings, those of internationalism and Soviet patriotism.

Acting in the spirit of Leninist requirements, in the spirit of the directives of the 27th CPSU Congress, it is necessary to firmly follow the line of all nations and ethnic groups of the country being represented in party, state and economic bodies, including at all-union level, so that the composition of the leading cadres most fully reflects the country's national structure.

Naturally, the point at issue is not a mechanical allocation of jobs and posts according to the national principle — this would mean the vulgarisation of the very idea of internationalism.

Political, practical and moral qualities are what determine in all instances the image of the worker. Besides, one should not disregard the particular delicacy of national aspects in one problem or another, folk traditions in the way of life, in people's psychology and behaviour. All this should be taken into account in the most careful way.

I ought to mention, comrades, that some leaders at times approach the solution of questions connected with relations between nationalities without due responsibility.

From time to time misunderstandings emerge in relations between neighbouring districts or regions of various republics. At times, they flare up into disputes escalating even into litigation, while the heads of party and local government bodies shirk principled solutions rather than prevent or abate the passions. Political workers ought to be able to act in such situations and cool unhealthy emotions.

Our theoretical thought is greatly indebted to the practice of national relations. I mean the apparently insufficient analysis of nationalities policy issues that would correspond to the present stage of the country's development.

It is a fact, comrades, that instead of conducting objective research into real phenomena in the sphere of national relations and analysis of the actual socio-economic and cultural processes — very complicated and contradictory in their essence — some of our social scientists have for a long time preferred to create upbeat treatises at times reminiscent of complimentary toasts rather than serious scientific studies.

One should admit that the errors which were allowed to occur in the sphere of national relations and their manifestations remained in the shadow, and it was not accepted practice to mention them. This has resulted in the negative consequences with which we are now dealing.

We stressed at the 27th Congress the invariability of our party's tradition that was initiated by Lenin: to display special tact and care in everything that concerns the development of national relations, that affects the interests of each nation and ethnic group and people's national feelings, and to resolve in a timely way questions emerging in this sphere.

It is in the traditions of Bolshevism to wage a principled struggle against any manifestations of nationalist narrow-mindedness and boastfulnesss, nationalism and chauvinism, preference of local to state interests, zionism and anti-semitism — no matter what their form might be.

We ought to bear in mind that nationalism and proletarian internationalism are two opposite policies, two opposing world outlooks.

Proceeding from these positions, we shall be firm and principled. People's national sentiments deserve respect, they should not be ignored, but they should not be flirted with either.

Let those who would like to play on nationalist or chauvinistic prejudices entertain no illusions and expect no loosening up.

Principles, comrades, are principles precisely because they are not to be foregone. No doubt, this position — the principled, Leninist position — will be backed by the entire party, by the entire multi-national Soviet people.

THE NATIONAL PROCESSES IN THE USSR: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS

Following comrade Gorbachov's January 27 report to the Central Committee, an article by Academician Yulian Bromlei under the above heading was published in the newspaper *Pravda*. It reads as follows:

The solution of the national question in the USSR, viewed against the background of the legacy inherited from the past, is one of socialism's most outstanding achievements. The Party's consistency and continuity in implementing the Leninist nationalities policy do not exclude but, on the contrary, presuppose close attention to and account of the changes which are taking place in this sphere. With the reconstruction now under way throughout the country, this acquires special importance, for, as was noted at the January 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, the "negative phenomena and deformations we have been combatting have also manifested themselves in the sphere of relations between nationalities".

The legal equality of Soviet nationalities was proclaimed soon after the establishment of Soviet power. This, however, did not yet mean their equality *de facto,* especially in the economic sphere. So immediately after the October 1917 Revolution a full-scale attack was launched to eliminate the enormous difference in the people's economic development levels, that evil heritage of the tsarist monarchy. Colossal assistance was required, above all, on the part of Russia's working class, to overcome the poverty and backwardness of the former outlying national regions.

Today, all the necessary prerequisities are there to approach our economic issues, above all from the viewpoint of the state's interests as a whole.

In this context, however, mention should be made of the negative tendencies which manifested themselves in the Soviet economy in the 70s and the early 80s and which were discussed at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. These tendencies inevitably affected the national processes. The low industrial labour productivity growth rates in some Republics should be mentioned first in this regard. There have, no doubt, been other factors as well, such as the difference in the industrial pattern of the Republics, the specifics of their personnel training systems, the shortcomings in the sphere of management, and the slowness in the introduction of the scientific and technological achievements into practice.

The national processes are also influenced by the demographic factors, including migration, with the result that the Republics become ever more multinational. At present people who do not belong to the indigenous nationalities of the Republics comprise about 20 per cent of the USSR's population.

Under socialism, the changes in the nature of relations between nationalities are, in the first place, determined by transformations in the social-class sphere. The development of a social pattern common to all the socialist nations has been of the utmost importance. A major role in this process has been played by the emergence of the national working class whose share in the Republics' population has been growing steadily.

There has remained, though, a difference between the Republics as to the proportion of the working class among their basic nationality, especially of the industrial working class and its highly-skilled categories.

National intelligentsia have also appeared in all of the Republics. At first this mainly occurred in the sphere of creative activity, administration, management and in mass professions (doctors, teachers, etc.), but after the war the ranks of the intelligentsia have been intensively growing in science and engineering as well. One must bear in mind that in the once backward areas, the intelligentsia has appeared on an essentially bare ground.

Much credit for the levelling of the different nations' social pattern goes to the universal growth of the educational standards. But particularly important in this respect is the Republics' continued economic advancement, above all their industrialization and urbanization.

The Party's Leninist nationalities policy has resulted in the development of the Soviet people's integral culture, socialist in content, diverse in its national forms and internationalist in spirit, a culture based on the greatest achievements and original progressive traditions of the peoples of the USSR.

Another crucial achievement of the Party's Leninist nationalities policy has been the free development of the national languages with a simultaneously expanding use of the Russian language as a language of communication between different nationalities. In the 70s, the share of non-Russian people who had a good command of the Russian language showed an upward tendency.

At the same time, of no small importance is the learning by Russians and by people of other nationalities of the languages used by the native population of the Republics where they reside. This makes for better person-to-person relations and helps one to adapt onself better to an ethnically different environment.

It should be noted that the process of internationalization in most of our society's spheres is accompanied by people's growing national awareness. Underlying this process is, in the first instance, the Soviet nations' economic, social and cultural progress, which gives rise to a legitimate national pride among their people. This growth of national awareness characreristic of all nations goes hand in hand with a feeling of common Soviet pride, of common "Soviet awareness". But, of course, one should not forget that at times public consciousness and public psychology do not adequately reflect the objective social processes. Given certain conditions, there appear in individual people some manifestations of nationalism which is, from the point of view of social psychology, a form of egoism, a desire to secure privileges for one's nationality at the expense of others.

What causes such phenomena? People usually refer, above all, to the survival of old things in one's mind and to the influence of bourgeois propaganda. No doubt, these factors do play their role. But this is not the only thing. The reason for such phenomena must often be sought in the discrepancy between words and deeds, in the contradictory nature of society's development today and, to a large extent, in things that bear on public consciousness.

In some cases, one's unrealized expectations in a concrete situation, as often as not connected with production activity, may be viewed through a "national" prism. For example, when the educational level of the population in the Republics, including the indigenous nationalities, has grown, there may appear a disproportion between the supply of and the demand for qualified personnel. In Georgia, for one, in 1981-1985, about 19 per cent of the higher-school graduates were not provided with jobs on a planned basis. There is also something else: people's growing level of education is accompanied by their increased social expectations. Under these circumstances, an internationalist policy in matters related to personnel assumes a special significance. Belonging to a certain nationality cannot in itself be a privilege or an excuse for infringement. Because of this, ever since the early years of Soviet power, the personnel problem has more than once, and at all levels, been solved in the Republics by using the potential of the entire country.

The negative phenomena in the sphere of relations between nationalities are to be overcome by perfecting Soviet democracy and by consistently implementing the principles of socialist self-government, specifically through the active participation of representatives of all nationalities in the work of the organs of power and administration. This implies not only representation on the Republican level, but also in our countrywide organs of power and public organizations.

It must also be borne in mind that people's dissatisfaction with something in their everyday life may also "echo" in the sphere of national relations. Therefore, the Party's policy of intensifying production with a view to raising Soviet people's standard of living (more housing construction, better services, etc.) is of cardinal importance for relations between nationalities as well.

The problems arising in the area of national relations are sensitively reacted to by young people. This is strange, at first glance, considering that young people are more responsive to the internationalization of culture, are better educated and are socially mobile. But young people are, on the other hand, especially sensitive to any social distortions, often reacting to them emotionally, rather than rationally. Besides, as a rule, they have no experience of positive international contacts in the sphere of work.

The natural and logical process of the internationalization of culture and of mixing of people of different nationalities may sometimes be taken painfully. Wherever this process is particularly intensive, individual representatives of some nationalities are inclined to regard it as something almost threatening their national character, culture, language, etc. Hence, the sentiment of traditionalism, the underestimation of the Russian language as a medium of communication betweeen nationalities, the temptation to lock themselves within the narrow confines of national culture, and the blunting of internationalist conscience. These sentiments are used, and at times successfully, by nationalist elements.

A great role in regulating relations between different nationalities is played by multinational cities and construction projects. Joint work and association over long periods of time help build up friendly international contacts. In multinational collectives people have a better chance to observe the specific culture, everyday behaviour, customs and the way of life of representatives of other nationalities, and to compare them with their own. Obviously, an intelligent personnel policy and an attentive approach to the cultural requirements of people of all nationalities are of utmost importance under the present circumstances.

The development of the socialist nations and the new conditions in which they interact — equal, as they are, not only in their rights, but in their real socio-economic status — demand that the national question be constantly at the centre of attention.

(As reproduced in *Moscow News* No. 11, 1987).

A FINAL SALUTE TO TWO TREASON TRIALISTS

It is with deep regret that we record the death earlier this year of Gert Sibande and Hymie Barsel, two veteran members of the liberation movement who in 1956 sat side by side in the mammoth treason trial with which the Nationalist Government of the day hoped to crush the liberation movement.

GERT SIBANDE was born in the Ermelo district in 1901. From the age of 8, when he became a virtual child slave to the Afrikaner on whose farm his family sojourned, Sibande became aware of the overpowering injustice of a system which gave the landowner such power over his black farm workers. Sibande was forced by the farmer to change his name from Shadrack (the name given to him by his parents) to Gert because the farmer objected to his workers bearing English names. At 15 Sibande became a fully-fledged farm hand to relieve his father of the heavy burden.

Gert Sibande had no formal education but by sheer grit educated himself to become fluent in Zulu. His ambition to improve his own qualifications was soon transformed into determination to serve and improve the conditions of his fellow peasant workers. Very soon he had organised a type of information bureau for the benefit of his comrades and this developed into a Farm Workers' Association based in Bethal in the Eastern Transvaal.

Towards the end of the 1930s, realising that his efforts to rally the farm workers were not succeeding in recruiting enough peasants, whose conditions continued to deteriorate, Sibande decided after consultation with his comrades to travel to Johannesburg to seek advice from the leaders of the people's organisations in the city. He soon returned to Bethal where he formed a branch of the African National Congress in 1939 and was elevated to the chairmanship in 1942.

The tempo of his work increased enormously, and very soon his ANC branch blossomed into the strongest in the Eastern Transvaal. Recruitment flourished and out of this activity came such leaders as Uriah Maleka, Graham Morodi, Elijah Mampuru and John Nkadimeng, the current Secretary-General of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. It was a natural progression for Sibande and his comrades later on to join SACTU and influence this organisation to set up its national organising committees in the rural areas.

All these activities in the North and Eastern Transvaal soon brought Sibande to the attention of the authorities, particularly when demands were drawn up and presented to the farmers. In addition, Sibande had roped in the help of Rev. Michael Scott and Ruth First, whose exposure of the horrifying conditions of farm labourers on the potato farms of the Eastern Transvaal obtained world-wide publicity.

The government, whose survival depended in large measure on the support of the rural Afrikaners who had voted them into power in 1948, needed very little persuasion not only to exile Sibande from the main cities but also to ban him from Bethal. The local authorities prohibited him from returning to his birthplace in Ermelo so that for a long time he and his family lived like nomads until they finally settled in Evaton, near Vereeniging.

Sibande remained undaunted. He continued his work amongst farm workers even more intensively and his reputation spread throughout the land, where he was known as "The Lion of the East". His exploits were legendary.

During the historic decade of the 1950s Gert Sibande, because of his leadership of the workers in town and country, played an important part in helping formulate the policies of the ANC and was associated with practically every campaign which took place, from the 1952 Defiance Campaign to the formation of SACTU and the staging of the Congress of the People where he made an unexpected and dramatic appearance at Kliptown in 1955. All this in spite of the banning notices which showered down on him from 1953 onwards.

It was inevitable that he would be regarded as one of the chief accused when he was arrested for treason in 1956 together with 155 others. He was one of the few accused who was placed in the witness box to give evidence for the defence, which he did with great dignity and simplicity. It was during this trial, which lasted for nearly five years. that Sibande was elected President of the Transvaal Provincial ANC.

Sibande's last act of defiance was typical of this remarkable man. One of the last accused to be released from the treason trial, he was almost immediately banished to Komatipoort from which place he made his escape to Swaziland. Needing a tractor to hire out so that he could make a living, and unable to obtain one in Swaziland itself, it was natural for him to move into South Africa to buy one and equally natural for him to drive it back to Manzini.

This was not done in a spirit of bravado, but as an act which came naturally to a man who knew how to move about among his people whom he had served so selflessly throughout his life and whom he trusted to protect him from the oppressor. He died in February in Manzini after almost 30 years in exile.

W. Skoda

HYMIE BARSEL, who died in Johannesburg in March at the age of 67, will be best remembered for his years of dedication to the cause of national liberation and socialism which began in the early 1940s when the world was engulfed in fierce struggles against Nazism and Japanese militarism.

Hymie joined the Communist Party and also the Friends of the Soviet Union, of which he soon became a full-time functionary. It was in the movement that he met a fellow functionary Esther whom he later married. The two became inseparable in their political and social relationship which was to sustain them through years of hardship caused by police intimidation, banning orders and imprisonment.

With the coming of the cold war and the advent to power of the Nationalist Government, public support for the FSU went into decline, but this did not stop Hymie from continuing to inform the public about the progress and peace policies of the Soviet Union. A group of friends decided to revive the organisation and in the light of changed conditions it was called the Society for Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union. Hymie became its secretary and the Rev. D.C. Thompson (who died last year) its chairman.

Working under extremely difficult conditions, the Society was able to organise meetings to mark the October Revolution, talks and exhibitions and to issue pamphlets, books and occasionally the London published *Soviet Weekly*. The Society's most successful venture was the publication of *South Africans in the Soviet Union* giving vivid accounts of the land of socialism by Walter Sisulu, Duma Nokwe, Ruth First, Sam Kahn, Brian Bunting and Paul Joseph.

At the Congress of the People in 1955 the Society had its literature stall smashed in a frenzied attack by the police. Some 18 months later Hymie Barsel and the Rev. D.C. Thompson were arrested and charged with high treason, together with 154 others. This did not stop Hymie Barsel from selling his literature in court to his fellow accused and members of the public.

Hymie and Esther Barsel were detained without trial in the state of emergency which followed the Sharpeville shooting in 1960. In 1964 they were again detained and later charged with "furthering the aims of a banned organisation" — the Communist Party. Hymie Barsel was subsequently released, but Esther was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

Hymie Barsel was a member of the Congress of Democrats and the Transvaal Peace Council. At a well-attended memorial meeting in Johannesburg Helen Joseph and long-standing friends Issy Hayman and Miriam Heppner paid tribute to this outstanding comrade.

Abu Hassan

MARX & ENGELS The Communist Manifesto
BOOK
REVIEWS
V I Lenin
Karl Marx

THE BOTHA-REAGAN STRATEGY EXPOSED

Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom, by William J. Pomeroy (International Publishers, New York, 1986.)

William Pomeroy has been known for many years as one of the most steadfast and effective allies of the South African liberation movement. This book will further enhance his reputation. He has compressed into the space of 240 pages a remarkably wide-ranging survey of the apartheid system, its alliances with world imperialism and the struggle of the South African people to overthrow it. His account of the earlier history is necessarily brief but it brings out the essential points which the reader needs to know in order to understand the more recent period. His treatment of events from the mid-seventies to the present time is much more detailed and could hardly be improved upon. Particularly valuable is his lucid account of the relationship between the SACP and the ANC.

This is a subject on which the enemies of the liberation struggle have been pouring out a stream of falsehood and on which misunderstandings are common even among well-intentioned outsiders. If Pomeroy's book is as widely read as it deserves to be in the United States where it is published, it will revolutionise the level of understanding there. His account of Umkhonto we Sizwe also contains much which will be unfamiliar to the public and should contribute significantly to the understanding of our struggle by our friends outside South Africa.

For those readers who are already familiar with the South African side of the story, perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book is the light which it throws upon United States policy towards South Africa. For the last forty years, successive American governments have incurred the anger of the South African people by acting in a variety of ways against the liberation struggle. We have come to understand the basic reason for this behaviour, i.e.; the places occupied by the South African and the United States governments in the world imperialist system. Many of us have been tempted to think that we need understand no more — that the differences between successive American administrations and the interplay of different forces on the American political scene are of no importance to us. The last few years, however, have produced compelling evidence that this is a mistake. As we have watched the most reactionary American President of the post-war period compelled by domestic political pressure to modify his policy on South Africa, we have realised that we do need to know what is what and who is who in American politics. This book will help us do so. It records many of the principal events in American .policy-making on South Africa, from Henry Kissinger's report to the National Security Council in 1969, which asserted that there would never be a victory for the South African people, to Robert McNamara's 1982 speech, which described the inevitability of such victory. The manoeuvres of Chester Crocker, the Sullivan Code, the attempts of the AFL-CIO to infiltrate the South African trade union movement, are all documented along the way.

Comrade Pomeroy's book must therefore be warmly recommended to readers of every nationality.

P.M.

THE STRUGGLE TO LIBERATE AFRICAN LITERATURE

Towards the Decolonization of African Literature by Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike (London, Kegan Paul International, 1985)

I spent a sleepless night after marking undergraduate assignments on *South African People's Plays* (Kente, Shezi, Mutwa and Workshop '71) at the University in Southern Africa where I had just begun working. Lecturers in the English Department had encouraged students to compare our plays (quite inappropriately) with Shakespearean models and even European novels in the effort to demonstrate how weak they were. I discovered that when African students study African literature, they are taught to look for weaknesses. When they study European literature they must learn to admire.

Incidentally, at the same University there is still an English Department and the external examiner is the African critic, Eustace Palmer. In this department as in others of its kind students faced until recently a virtually unrelieved diet of published Western gurus like Adrian Roscoe, Gerald Moore and John Povey[1] and African critics like our external examiner and others. The syllabus of course includes Wole Soyinka and last year Africa was said to be honoured when Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In the light of all this *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature* makes refreshing and inspiring reading. It exposes the comparison of incomparable forms as a device for the denigration of African literature by European and Eurocentric African critics. It calls for the abolition of English Departments in independent Africa and the establishment of departments of African Languages, Oratures and Literatures, Comparative Literatures and Colonial Languages. It impressively exposes the shoddy, biased and reactionary writing of the majority of western critics and their African collaborators like Dan Izevbaye, Donatus Nwoga, Eldridge Jones[2] and our external examiner, Eustace Palmer.

Finally it singles out Wole Soyinka and subjects him to timely, hard-hitting but well-substantiated denunciation.

Situation of Dependency

The situation in the field of African literature — its writing, publishing, criticism and teaching — reflects, as any Marxist would expect, the economic relations of exploitation and subordination binding our continent to Europe and the United States. Literature is an important area of the ideological control which capitalism requires to support and maintain these relations. Just as imperialist domination needs to be challenged at the level of ownership, production and trade so it needs to be resisted at the ideological and artistic level.

Toward the Decolonization of African Literature began in 1972 when the authors produced an article of this title in the English Department at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, which was subsequently published in *Okike* and *Transition.* It provoked published reactions from Donatus Nwoga — 'Obscurity and Commitment in African Literature' — and from Soyinka himself — 'Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition'.[3]

The book's Nigerian authors write from a position of Pan-Africanism, black consciousness and anti-imperialism: "In undertaking this work we set ourselves the limited task of probing the ways and means whereby Western imperialism has maintained its hegemony over African literature". In an ideological area where the struggle is as backward as it is in African literature, the fierce spirit of independence such a position encourages can make an extremely important contribution towards 'decolonizing' African literary creation and criticism.

On the other hand the limitations of the Africanist ideology lead to serious shortcomings.

The book's stated aims are to counteract the effects of Eurocentric criticism and expose the hegemony of Western imperialism over literature in Africa; to rehabilitate and assert the artistic worth of indigenous African literary forms as 'the ultimate foundation, guidepost and point of departure for a modern liberated African literature'; to attack the Eurocentricity of African literary critics and derivative African prose and poetry 'with its weak preciosity, ostentatious erudition and dunghill piles of esoterica and obscure allusions' and to promote an active nationalist consciousness.

In chapter one the authors evaluate the criticism of the African novel and especially what they call the 'Eurocentric charges' of Adrian Roscoe, John Povey, Charles Larson[4] and Eustace Palmer. In chapter two they examine the fact that African poets are generally praised while the novelists are upbraided. They find the reason for this to be the tendency of most published African poets writing in English to follow the European 'modernist' tradition with its intense individualism, obscurity and lack of commitment whereas the novelists are more concerned with handling themes of burning concern to African society generally. For obvious reasons the Western mentors of African literature are not as comfortable with the latter as they are with the former.

Chapter three looks at poetry and criticism, concentrating in particular on the Ibadan-Nsukka-Leeds connection i.e. Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Donatus Nwoga and Martin Banham[5]. Chapter four lists the tasks and issues which the African writer should address himself to in the ongoing struggle to decolonize our literature.

Passion and Wit

The book is an extremely impressive onslaught, characterized by a passionate tone, a cutting wit and very good and detailed comparative analysis. Take the following extract as an example of the tone and the wit. Here Roscoe's praise of the critic Michael Echeruo is shown to be hopelessly contradictory. Roscoe praises Echeruo because 'he brought to a discussion of African verse insights gained from Eliot and Pound, from Tennyson, Arnold and Vergil'. Comment Chinweizu and co.:

> "Is one supposed to believe that an African shows 'tough intellectual independence' (Roscoe's phrase) by being beholden to Eliot, Pound, Tennyson, Arnold, Vergil and other mentors of the European tradition? Our great grandfathers, who had to face the brunt of the European invasion of Africa, would have thought otherwise!" (pp150-1)

The following is another quote from Roscoe which makes it very clear why Chinweizu and co. are angry. Roscoe has basically been saying that the natural form for the African writer is the short story — an argument which Chinweizu and the others have no difficulty in demolishing. He concludes, 'wagging the admonitory finger of the colonial taskmaster': "The sooner they (African writers) appreciate this . . . the sooner they will produce work of a consistently high quality": The authors comment:

> "Well, well, what's this but another version of the notorious racist remark: 'Niggers, stick to what you are good at. Don't aspire to more education than you are genetically capable of. You are made to walk barefoot: don't aspire to wear shoes till you get to heaven. The proper profession for you is carpentry, not law'." (p 95)

It is however the closely argued analytical sections that are most impressive, in particular the authors' examination of the charge that African traditional narratives (orature) are thin on characterization and 'plot' and that the longer African epics are short, unsustained and simple in comparison with others. They provide numerous examples and scholarly assessments which contradict these charges, including extracts from various African epics such as *Sundiata, Monzon and the King of Kore* and *Kambali*, which convincingly demonstrate their subtlety and sophistication. As for length they point out that *Sundiata* is 84 pp of 40 lines while the British national epic, *Beowulf*, is only 75 pp of 34 lines, the Spanish *El Cid* is 127 pp of 33 lines and the French *Song of Roland* is 100 pp of 28 lines. What's more *Sundiata* is printed as prose; printed as verse it would be much more.

Call for Simplicity

Over and over again the authors expose the contradictions, sloppy scholarship, even basic lack of research that characterise the work of western detractors or 'umpires' of African literature. Their tratment of African collaborators is as detailed and impressive. They call on African poets to abandon the ostentatious obscurity exemplified by much of Soyinka, J.P. Clark and the early Okigbo's[6] poetry in favour of the clear simplicity and dignity of traditional African verse, exemplified by the following extract of a poem by Matei Markwei:

The boys play hide and seek
And the girls play hide and seek
The boys know where the girls hide
And the girls know where the boys hide
So in their hide and seek
Boys seek girls,
Girls seek boys,
And each to each sing
Songs of love.

Soyinka found this to be "trite, prosaic, coy, kindergarten drivel which my seven-year old daughter would be ashamed to write." (p 225)

This book is essential for all those writers and students of African literature who have been unfortunate to have Roscoe, Moore, Palmer and their ilk pushed down their throats and who have been called upon to prefer Soyinka to Ngugi, Sembene or Achebe.[7] It is however a book Marxists will need to go beyond. The limitations of its Africanism are apparent in its racial exclusiveness eg. it is apparently written for "readers of all ages throughout the *black* world"; its Pan Africanist romanticism exemplified by its call for the development of a Pan African *lingua franca* (p 299); its petit-bourgeois neglect of the masses of workers and peasants and obsession with the 'elite' instead; total oversight of the link between the struggle for cultural and economic independence (see pp 291-5) and therefore the existence of an alternative ideology, socialism, which already claims the adherence of millions of people in this world (never referred to in this book) and which knows no continental (Pan-African) or racial (black consciousness) divides.

R.K.

Notes

1. Eustace Palmer, author of *An introduction to the African Novel (1972);* Adrian Roscoe, author of *Mother is Gold* (1971). Gerald Moore, author of *Seven African Writers* (1962) and John Povey, author of 'The Novels of Chinua Achebe' in *Introduction to Nigerian Literature* (1972). Other 'western gurus' are Margaret Lawrence (*Long Drums and Canons*) and Christopher Heywood (*Perspectives in African Literature, Perspective in South African Literature*).

2. Izevbaye and Nwoga are Nigerian academics, Eldridge Jones is a Sierra Leonian academic, editor of the influential *African Literature Today* series and author of a study on the work of Wole Soyinka.

3. Nwoga's article appeared in *African Literature Today* 6 (1974) and Soyinka's in *Transition* 48 (1975).

4. Charles Larson, an American, author of *The Emergence of African Fiction* (1972) about which Chinweizu etc write: "One wonders what African fiction is supposed to be emerging from" and the Ghanaian novelist, Ayi Kwei Armah, writes: "It would only be a fitting tribute to this bold, resourceful and enterprising Western critic of African Literature if his name became synonymous with the style of scholarly criticism of which he is such an inimitably brilliant exponent, that style which consists of the judicious distortion of African truths to fit Western prejudices . . . I suggest we call it 'larsony'."

5. Martin Banham, director of Workshop Theatre, University of Leeds, and author of *African Theatre Today* (1976).

6. J.P. Clark, Nigeria's poet and playwright, see *A Reed In the Tide* (1965), and *Three Plays* (1964) and *Ozidi* (1966), Christopher Okigbo, Nigerian poet, see *Labyrinths* (1971).

7. Ngugi wa Thiongo, exiled Kenyan novelist and playwright, numerous works including the plays *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* and *I'll Marry When I Want* which led to his being detained by Kenyatta; Ousmane Sembene, progressive Senegalese novelist and film-maker, see *The Money Order, Xala* and *God's Bits of Wood;* Chinua Achebe, Nigerian novelist, author of the renowned *Things Fall Apart* (1969).

A BOOK ABOUT REFORM NOT REVOLUTION

South Africa without apartheid; dismantling racial discrimination, by H. Adam and K. Moodley, (University of California, 1986).

From its preface to the conclusion this book is about reform, not revolution. It is interesting to note that books such as this appear at a crucial historical period in the revolutionary process in South Africa. For comrades in the trade unions, street committees, civic associations, youth congresses, women's organisations, and so on, the demand of the day is very clear: total liberation now. Unfortunately, this book does not assist in strengthening this process towards the ideals enshrined in the Freedom Charter and *The Road to South African Freedom.*

The book is written by two academics teaching in Canada. Heribert Adam is Professor of Sociology at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and Kogila Moodley teaches "multicultural" studies at the University of British Columbia. Moodley was born in Durban to a Congress family. She says that her family were active in the passive resistance campaigns organised by the Congress Movement. Her husband, Adam, was born in Germany before the Second World War. Adam has written a few books and numerous articles on South Africa. He taught for two years at Natal University in the late sixties. He served on the Buthelezi Commission.

I was struck by the inconsistency in the preface of the biographies of the authors. Let me illustrate this. Adam was born in Germany and "... by chance ... spent two years in Southern Africa, teaching full-time at Natal University in 1967". He goes on to say that because of his "... illegal courtship of (his) future wife ... subsequent visa applications were refused" by the apartheid regime. Fine. Somehow, however, in 1983-85 he and his wife Kagila were in "Ciskei", "Zululand" and Durban (p xiv-xv). Whatever happened to their visa applications!

The central theme of the book is the development by the authors of a reform model to replace the present apartheid regime. The authors characterise the South African social formation as follows:

> "The essence of South Africa's illegitimacy lies in three aspects of its corporatism (?): (1) imposed group membership, (2) legalised racial group boundaries; and (3) the convergence (?) of race and class." (p 13)

To explain the above jumble of words, they proceed from pages 13-17 to discuss "group formation, group boundaries, race and class". Unfortunately we end up more confused by their discussion. Later in the book we are told that South Africa ". . . is not a colonial problem" (p 209). I can only suggest here that the authors study again our thesis of "colonialism of a special type".

Their reform model is based on the thesis of 'power-sharing' federalism which they say ". . . can best reconcile the conflicting interests and has an optimal chance of democratic conflict regulation" (p 218). In such a model, we are told, there should be "a common citizenship with universal franchise, though not necessarily in a winner-take-all Westminster system: proportional representation of parties, based on self-association (?) instead of imposed racial origin; an undivided not necessarily centralist . . . state" (p 251).

For those of us who are participants in the struggle (not just theorising about it), the demand for a unitary, democratic, non-racial society is fundamental. We fail to understand, nor do the authors explain, why one-person-one-vote in a unitary South Africa cannot work.

The authors' sympathies for Inkatha are clearly spelt out. "Inkatha practises an appealing pragmatism in the face of . . . hostile exclusion" (p 90), ". . . in Natal urban and rural sub-cultures (?) interpenetrate in close spatial proximity. In this respect, Buthelezi can base his leadership claims in elected democratic legitimacy(!) as well as hereditary right" (p 86). "In Natal Buthelezi's Inkatha directs and disciplines political activism . . ." (p 113). Finally the authors are great admirers of Inkatha secretary general Oscar Dhlomo whose ". . . quiet dignity and political sagacity we . . . appreciate" (p xvi).

Inkatha vigilantes who are murdering activists in Natal will be happy to read this book.

Distorted Politics

The politics of the national liberation movement headed by the ANC are terribly distorted. The basic guiding revolutionary document of the liberation movement and the people of South Africa is said to be "vague" (p 216). Adam and Moodley add that "The Freedom Charter's terms resemble the old-fashioned values of liberal democracies" (p 213). We cannot agree with this. To demand that the people must govern is not old-fashioned. To demand equality irrespective of sex, creed and colour is not old-fashioned. To demand the sharing amongst all the people of South Africa's wealth is not old-fashioned.

The book completely misunderstands the movement's call to make South Africa ungovernable and apartheid unworkable. The authors say: "Making South Africa 'ungovernable' in order to facilitate liberation risks having a post-apartheid society that also will be ungovernable, as a result of the irreparable damage done to the country's economy" (p 89). It is difficult to see how they have arrived at this conclusion. The authors fail to appreciate the readiness of the oppressed to fight apartheid by using all strategies at their disposal. But we are also ready to reconstruct our country in a democratic atmosphere.

The authors are anti-socialism and Communist Party as well. They warn reformers to move faster before ". . . power is wrested from [them] bit by bit, in the name of democratic socialism, [which] wherever its proponents have claimed to realise it, has thus far failed" (p 23). We are told neither what exactly is meant by "democratic socialism" nor where it has failed. The SACP is described as ". . . the Communist Party element" (p 121). (Sounds like P.W. Botha!).

The book's academic style is tedious and a lot of it incomprehensible as well. There is too much emphasis on ethnicity and long discussions of dubious politics. The liberation movement is criticised for having failed to win the support of the hierarchy of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), in particular Archbishop Lekganyane (p 202). But "hierarchy" must not be confused with the mass membership of the ZCC. There are cases to show that members of the ZCC have joined in certain areas of South Africa to oppose the apartheid regime. (In Mamelodi for example, ZCC members have strongly opposed the deployment of troops, more especially after one of their members was shot and killed by the SADF).

All in all, this is not the sort of book I can recommend to our readers. There are many good books waiting to be read and certainly this is not one of them.

T.Z.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OPPOSITION TO LESOTHO TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA

From Frank Letsie, Maseru

Dear Editor,

The Lesotho Government policy of collaboration with the all-White South African Government in training the police and armed forces of Lesotho, has fallen into disfavour among wide sections of the Basotho nation.

To take only one section of the worried Basotho population, there are senior officers of the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police who are stationed at Maseru and elsewhere. They include senior officers of the Political (Security) Branch of the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police. They strongly object to the fact that they are being trained in South Africa for their tasks, duties and responsibilities in Lesotho.

The basis of their objection and opposition is that Lesotho, though an independent sovereign state, has its key men in the Police Force trained in another country, a White-ruled state which is clearly keen to undermine Lesotho's independence, and to whittle down the sovereignty of the Lesotho state.

They regard this arrangement as the first step in a process to reduce Lesotho from the status of a completely independent African state to that of a puppet state — to that of a downright Bantustan.

They feel that this move is the direct antithesis of the long struggle of the Basotho people since the days of the great Mosheoeshoe the First, to maintain the independence and sovereignty of Lesotho in the face of threats by a neighbouring state, and actual military attacks on Moshoeshoe's stronghold at Thaba-Bosiu. They feel that the trend must be decisively reversed, so as to defeat the machinations of the enemies of Lesotho's independence.

They feel that the Government of Lesotho should immediately address itself to this dangerous situation, and that the said Government should reverse the tide of events before it is too late . . . before Lesotho is swallowed by the monster (Kholumolumo) of Boer-British-American imperialism and neo-colonialism.

If the enemy schemes and stratagems succeed, they fear that the Basotho might even be used by the Boer fascists and colonialists as tools and instruments to bolster up South African fascism, and to help crush the South African national liberation movement at a time when the Basotho people in general, and the senior officers in the Lesotho Police Force in particular, are happy at the successes of the South African Revolution, and the heroic role of Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

MAYIBUYE I AFRICA

(Names supplied of five senior officers who object to being trained in South Africa. — Ed.)

§§

The Communist Party stands against the rich, and voices the demands of the poor; it organises and heads the working people in their struggle against the rich, in their struggle to secure better conditions of life.

Alpheus Maliba, 1939

§§

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